# CITY HILIGHTS

The Truth Speaks

SATURDAY ▸ MAY 30, 2026 ▸ VOL: 11 ▸ ISSUE: 315 ▸ PAGES 12 ▸ ₹2.00

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# GUV DISSOLVES K'TAKA CABINET

**Siddu to continue as caretaker, Cong to decide his successor at 4 pm today; DKS says CM 'stood firmly beside me'**

**BENGALURU**

Karnataka Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot on Friday accepted the resignation of chief minister Siddaramaiah, a day after the veteran Congress leader stepped down from the post amid an ongoing leadership transition in the state.

Gehlot has also dissolved the council of ministers headed by him with immediate effect. Siddaramaiah will continue as the caretaker CM until alternative arrangements are made, the notification added.

The development marks the culmination of days of intense political activity within the ruling Congress in Karnataka.

## CLP to meet today

**Bengaluru**: The Congress Legislature Party (CLP) will meet at 4 pm on Saturday at Vidhana Soudha to elect its new leader, with DK Shivakumar set to be formally announced as the next Chief Minister. The meeting has been convened under the direction of outgoing CLP leader Siddaramaiah, who will chair the session. Senior leader Randeep Singh Surjewala is also expected to attend. Siddaramaiah resigned on Thursday, with Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot accepting his resignation on Friday and dissolving the Council of Ministers with immediate effect. The leadership transition is reportedly in line with an understanding reached in May 2023 to transfer power after two-and-a-half years. Following his resignation, Siddaramaiah met Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi, Mallikarjun Kharge and KC Venugopal in New Delhi.Shivakumar also met Kharge to seek his blessings ahead of taking charge and said the swearing-in ceremony would be scheduled after the CLP formally elects its leader.

## Siddu, DKS hold crucial meeting in Delhi

**NEW DELHI**

A high-level meeting of senior Congress leaders, including outgoing Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar and senior leader KJ George, was held in New Delhi on Friday to discuss the formation of the new government in Karnataka.

Shivakumar also met other leaders of the Congress in a hotel in the national capital, earlier in the day. The developments come after Siddaramaiah resigned from the Chief Minister's position on Thursday.

Siddaramaiah earlier held discussions with Mallikarjun Kharge and Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi, as well as Congress General Secretary KC Venugopal, regarding the Karnataka cabinet reshuffle, RS elections and other organisational matters.

### Siddu pushes for son Yathindra's inclusion in new dispensation

Outgoing Chief Minister Siddaramaiah along with his son Yathindra met Congress top leadership, including Rahul Gandhi and Sonia Gandhi on Friday morning at their residence in Delhi. Siddaramaiah introduced Yathindra to top Congress leadership and tried to impress upon them to accommodate him in the next dispensation, sources said. He also reprotedly requested the high command to accommodate his loyalists in the new government.

## '50% of Cabinet to be new faces'

**Bengaluru**: Chief Whip of Karnataka Legislative Council, Saleem Ahmed, said half of the new cabinet under DK Shivakumar will be new faces.

"Absolutely, new faces will be introduced. As we have stated previously, we believe that 50% of the cabinet positions should be allocated to new faces," he said. "Regarding the ministers who are to be replaced, those who are experienced and have served as ministers for three years, they should be assigned to party organisational work."

**The likely new Cabinet**

The likely ministers are Yathindra Siddaramaiah, AS Ponnanna, Byrathi Suresh, HC Mahadevappa, Priyank Kharge, MB Patil, G Parameshwara, Krishna Byregowda, Santosh Lad, Dinesh Gundu Rao, Lakshmi Hebbalkar, Ramalinga Reddy, Rizwan Arshad, UT Khader and Sharath Bachegowda.

## 'Dignified transition': Cong top brass heaps praises on Siddu

**New Delhi:** A day after Siddaramaiah stepped down as CM, the Congress high command on Friday praised the veteran Kuruba leader for ensuring a smooth transition of power and described him as an "uncompromising upholder of of secular values."

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and General Secretary (in-charge of Communication) Jairam Ramesh took to X to pay rich tributes to Siddaramaiah.

"From humble beginnings to serving Karnataka twice as Chief Minister, he remained steadfast in his commitment to equality, harmony, and the welfare of the marginalised," Kharge said.

Jairam Ramesh praised the dignity shown by Siddaramaiah during the leadership change.

Party insiders were reportedly initially concerned about possible high drama, as several Siddaramaiah loyalists had sought his approval for a signature campaign to demonstrate strength. His clear stance has effectively put to rest to all speculations.

## Former Karnataka minister dies

**TUMAKURU**

Former Karnataka minister Venkataramanappa passed away following a heart attack at a private hospital in Bengaluru early Friday morning, according to family sources. He was 80.

Venkataramanappa had been admitted to the hospital due to age-related illness.

Venkataramanappa was a prominent political figure from Karnataka's Tumakuru district. He had served as Pavagada MLA four times and as a minister twice.

Known for his grassroots connections, he was widely recognised as a leader of the oppressed sections and enjoyed significant popularity in the Pavagada region.

He is survived by his son HV Venkatesh, the current Pavagada MLA.

The mortal remains of Venkataramanappa were brought to Pavagada where arrangements were made for public viewing at Gurubhavana Ground in Pavagada town.

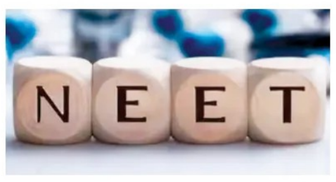
The last rites will be held on Saturday after 12 noon at the farm in Hanumanthanahalli as per the traditions of the Bhovi community.

# 'Learn from UPSC': SC to NTA on NEET paper leak

**NEW DELHI**

Hearing a batch of petitions over the NEET-UG medical entrance exam's cancellation after a paper leak, the Supreme Court on Friday remarked that the National Testing Agency (NTA) could learn from the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC).

Justice PS Narasimha also asked orally how the failure could occur despite a high-powered committee having been formed after a similar incident in 2024. "Either there is something wrong with the original recommendation or there is no proper implementation," the judge remarked, it said.



**'Shouldn't disappoint youngsters'**

The apex court said that the situation was "actually very traumatic" not only for the students but for their families as well if something like this happened.

"We should not disappoint our youngsters," a bench of Justices P S Narasimha and Alok Aradhe said while hearing pleas on the matter, including one seeking a direction to replace or restructure the National Testing Agency with a robust and autonomous body to conduct the medical entrance examination.

**PM personally supervising situation: Centre**

The government then informed the court that Prime Minister Narendra Modi is personally supervising the NEET-UG re-conduct. This submission was made by Solicitor General Tushar Mehta after the apex court sought a response from the government in an affidavit detailing how and in which manner the process and conclusion of the leak probe would be done.

A High-Level Committee of Experts (HLCE) was constituted by the Union Ministry of Education in June 2024, following the NEET-UG paper leak controversy that year. It was headed by former ISRO chairman K Radhakrishnan.

### NEET-UG to shift to computer-based format from next year: NTA tells SC

The National Testing Agency on Friday told the Supreme Court that it is prepared to conduct the NEET-UG examination in computer-based test (CBT) mode from next year after consultations with the Centre. The submission was made before a bench of Justices PS Narasimha and Alok Aradhe, which is hearing a batch of petitions related to the alleged NEET-UG paper leak that led to the cancellation of the May 3 examination this year. In an affidavit filed before the apex court, the NTA said a high-level committee of experts (HLCE) had recommended transitioning NEET-UG to the CBT mode. The agency said NEET-UG remained the only major examination conducted by the NTA in pen-and-paper mode, primarily due to the scheme followed by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and the National Medical Commission. It said all other major NTA examinations are already conducted in CBT mode. "The transition will be implemented from the next examination cycle in consultation with the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (the client ministry for NEET-UG) - thereby bringing all major NTA examinations onto the CBT platform," it said.

## 6 hacked, shot dead over land dispute in Vijayapura

**VIJAYAPURA**

The Bhima river belt witnessed another brutal incident of violence after six people were murdered over a land dispute in Govindapura village of Chadachan taluk in Vijayapura district on Friday.

According to police sources, the victims were attacked with deadly weapons and later shot dead in a gruesome assault that has sent shockwaves across the region.

The deceased have been identified as Revanasiddappa Nirale, Dundappa Revanasiddappa Nirale, Shivaputra Revanasiddappa Nirale, Chandrashekhar Nirale, Shabbir Nadaf and another person.

Preliminary investigation revealed that a long-standing dispute over agricultural land existed between the families of Appugouda Patil and Revanasiddappa Nirale.

The rivalry between the two families had reportedly intensified over the past few months. Sources said that a "Nyaya Panchayati" meeting had been held a few days ago in an attempt to resolve the issue amicably. On Thursday, members of the Nirale family and others had again gone for discussions related to the same land dispute when the attack took place.

As per police, a verbal altercation broke out between the two families during another mediation meeting held on Friday over the same issue. "Following this, deadly weapons were used, and firing took place, leading to the deaths of six people," he said.

### Deadly attack over land

- Long-standing deud between two families in Govindapura village
- Victims attacked with sharp weapons before firing.
- Land dispute reportedly trigerred violence.

## 5 killed after car crashes into stationary truck in Chitradurga

**CHITRADURGA**

Five people travelling in a car died on the spot after their vehicle crashed into a stationary truck near a dhaba at Tumkurlahalli Gate on the Bidar–Srirangapattna National Highway 150A in Karnataka's Chitradurga district on Thursday night.

According to police, the occupants were travelling towards Ballari when the accident occurred near Tumkurlahalli Gate in Molakalmuru taluk. Police said the car's tyre burst, causing the driver to lose control before the vehicle rammed into the rear of the parked truck.All five died on the spot, police added.

One of the deceased has been identified as Raghavendra, assistant secretary of the Challakere Taluk Photographers' Association. The other victims were identified as Rudresh, Soma, Mallikarjun and Pramod. Police said further verification of identities was underway.

## Ministry suspects anti-social elements behind rising train-fire incidents

**NEW DELHI**

An internal investigation has found that anti-social elements may be behind the increasing incidents of fire and smoke inside train coaches, according to railway ministry officials.

A senior railway official Friday said preliminary investigations into recent fire incidents on various trains indicate the involvement of anti-social elements, as well as irresponsible activities by passengers.

"Today, an incident of fire was reported in the toilet of the D-5 coach of train number 17642 Narkhed-Kachiguda Express at Hingoli station. This train operates under the Nanded

Division," the official said.

"Upon receiving information about the incident, Railway Protection Force (RPF) and operational staff took immediate action and quickly controlled the fire with the help of fire extinguishers, thereby averting a major tragedy," he added. He said the preliminary probe indicates foul play and possible role of anti-social elements.

Railway ministry officials said in another incident, the cause of the sudden alarm raised by the Fire and Smoke Detection System (FSDS) on train number 18207 Durg-Ajmer Express was found to be burnt pieces of 'beedi' (hand-rolled cigarettes) in the toilet of one of the coaches.

"According to the onboard housekeeping staff, burnt beedi pieces were found in the toilet of the M-1 coach," officials said.

"We have taken these incidents seriously and a thorough investigation is underway. The prompt and swift action of railway personnel ensured the safety of passengers and brought the situation under control quickly," a senior RPF official said.

## Corruption will continue: Ashoka

**Bengaluru**: Leader of the Opposition and BJP leader R Ashoka on Friday said changing the chief minister will not alter the state's governance, remarking, "New CM, DK Shivakumar will come. But in the government, I think nothing will change. Corruption will continue..."

Addressing the media, he characterized the potential replacement of Siddaramaiah with Shivakumar as mere reshuffling, calling it "new wine in the same old bottle."

He emphasized that regardless of who assumes the Chief Minister's office, the administration is struggling with deep-rooted corruption and a severe lack of development funds.

**'MAHA' TRAGEDY**

## *'Toxic liquor network': 18 deaths in 48 hrs*

**PUNE**

Police have intensified investigation into an illicit liquor network in the Pune district after 18 people died in the last 48 hours following the consumption of methanol-laced alcohol.

While 13 people died in Pimpri Chinchwad's Phugewadi and Dapodi, five died in Pune's Hadapsar and Kalepadal after allegedly consuming the liquor. While the police earlier tied the deaths to unrelated illnesses, a common factor between all the victims' were the symptoms of severe dizziness and abdominal pain. These are consistent with the initial signs of liquor poisoning. Post-mortem reports were later received by the police, following which they began the process of registering cases under Sections 105 (culpable homicide not amounting to murder), 123 (causing hurt by means of harmful substances with intent to commit a crime), along with other relevant sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) and the Maharashtra Prohibition Act.

A man named Yogesh Wankhede emerged as a key link in the case and was arrested after he surrendered before the authorities. Questioning revealed he had supplied the chemical-laced liquor in the Pune city and Pimpri Chinchwad areas. Atul Kanade, Superintendent of Police of the State Excise Department, stated that the accused allegedly mixed the toxic chemical methanol into the liquor, resulting in multiple deaths. He is being questioned further to identify others involved in the illicit liquor network.

Vinay Chaube, Police Commissioner, Pimpri-Chinchwad City, said that apart from Wankhede, five accused are currently in police custody, while two others are in the custody of the State Excise Department. The investigation was later handed over to the Crime Branch.

QUICK READ

## 'News First Property Habba' from today

**CH NEWS**, Bengaluru
The 'News First Property Habba' will bring home buyers, investors and leading real estate players together on May 30 and 31. To buy a house or plot, people have to travel from one corner of the city to another and visit individual developer offices. They have to set aside a day to compare budget, location and amenities. But in this 'Property Habba', all this will be available at one place. The festival will be held at the Royal Senate on the Palace Grounds. Plots, apartments, villas, luxury homes, farm lands and gated communities are available here. There will be options to suit everyone's budget, from middle-class families to premium investors. Almost all the services required to build or buy a house will be available. Leading construction companies, interior design firms, home automation, bank and home loan advisors, architectural and design experts will also be present, the release said.

## Hoysala police rescue missing 8-year-old boy

**CH NEWS**, Bengaluru
Hoysala police have located a missing eight-year-old boy the help of 112 helpline and returned him to his mother. On May 26, at around 10 am, a member of the public called the helpline and informed that the boy had been found near M.S. Ramaiah College under the jurisdiction of Yeshwantpur police station. The staff on duty passed the information on to Assistant Police Sub-Inspector Narasimha Murthy and Assistant Head Constable Naveen Kumar, who were on duty at 'Hoysala' of Sadashivanagar police station. Hoysala police reached the spot within 14 minutes and rescued eight-year-old Tejas. It is learnt that the boy had run away from home. The mother had gone towards Mathikere in search of the boy. The boy's mother was found and handed over to them.

## Man threatening people with machete held

**CH NEWS**, Bengaluru
A 42-year-old man was arrested after he allegedly roamed the streets with a long machete in Neelasandra, central Bengaluru, on May 26, threatening people and demanding money. The accused, Syed Mustan, is a resident of MG Garden. According to the complaint filed by head constable Syed Moin Ulla, when he and colleague S Venkatesh were patrolling the area, they noticed Mustan carrying the machete and brandishing it at people while demanding money.

# BBA, BCA courses hot ticket in govt colleges

If admission trends in government colleges are any indication, BCA and BBA courses are emerging as the top choices among students this year.

**CH NEWS,** Bengaluru

In response to the rising demand, the Commissionerate of Collegiate Education has decided to allow 26 government first-grade colleges to introduce BBA and BCA programmes.

The colleges that sought to start new programmes are mainly from Dharwad and Kalaburagi regions. The department said steps will be taken to start the courses only after obtaining approval from the All India Council of Technical Education.

Another 186 colleges will increase their intake for BA, BCom and BSc programmes, including BCA and BBA. For instance, Govt First Grade College in Raichur will get 270 more seats to increase its total intake to 300. SSA Government First Grade College in Ballari has increased BCom seats by 100. Jamkhandi College has improved intake in two BA programmes, history and political science,

by 100 each. Many colleges have agreed to run evening shifts with the existing infrastructure to ensure a large number of students can be accommodated.

The principals are willing to conduct classes in two shifts as per the requirement in the few colleges that lack building, furniture and computer infrastructure," said the department of collegiate education in a proposal it initially sent to the govt.

"If students from rural areas can get admission in govt colleges for new courses that are in market demand at minimal cost, these courses will not only help the future of the students but will also increase the General Admission Ratio (GER) of higher education, the department stated.

The courses being introduced are in line with industry demands and will include apprenticeship-embedded learning programmes. At the same time, 458 programmes will be closed down for the 2026-27 academic year and intake will be reduced in 1,480 colleges.

Minister for Higher Education MC Sudhakar had said they would consider closing down some of those. The programmes being closed are three-subject combinations, including history, political science, Kannada and sociology, among others. The number reduced ranges from 20 to 100 seats.

The Collegiate Department noted the failure to reduce intake will result in the university continuing to bear the burden of paying affiliation fee to AICTE. It will also affect the cumulative grade point average scores and thus the National Assessment and Accreditation Council grading.

## Misinformation about e-khata without knowledge of law: Moudgil

**BENGALURU**

Some vested interests, who were benefiting from the previous handwritten system, are spreading misinformation about e-khata and its integration with the registration system without being aware of the legal-administrative framework, said Munish Moudgil, Special Commissioner, Revenue, Greater Bengaluru Authority.

Before the e-account integration, the management of properties in Bengaluru was chaotic. About 85 percent of the transactions coming under the Cauvery system were related to unauthorized layouts, illegal revenue plots, unapproved sub-divisions or faulty ownership records. In 2024-25 itself, before the e-account integration, there were more than 75.000 such transactions. Now, such transactions have almost come down to zero, the release said.

Citizens were being misled into buying properties without planning approval or municipal approvals. Many writ petitions have come before the High Court challenging the incorporation of e-khata. The court has upheld the e-khata system, he said.Digitization and integration have led to resentment among some sections as they have eliminated an opaque system that has benefited middlemen, illegal developers, document abusers and speculative real estate deals for decades, he said.

# Food dept server glitch: 40% of families yet to receive ration

**CH NEWS,** Bengaluru

**The server down has resulted in disruption of ration distribution and has caused panic among card holders**

The Food Department's server down problem has become a headache for ration distributors for the past week, and even as the month of May draws to a close, they are struggling to distribute food grains to 40 percent of the beneficiaries.

So far, only 60 percent of the people have been distributed rations. For the past one week, it has not been possible to distribute food grains to two people per hour. This problem has worsened since Monday, creating a situation where beneficiaries and fair price shop owners are in a difficult situation. While this has put the ration distributor in trouble, it has also angered the beneficiaries who have been waiting for hours.

Not only in Bengaluru city, but also in most districts of the state including Hassan, Mandya, Davangere, Shivamogga, Belgaum, Uttara Kannada, Mangalore, Tumkur, Yadgir, Chikkamagaluru, Chitradurga, Mysore, Hubballi, the server down problem has increased for the past one week. Therefore, some fair price shop owners have said that it will be difficult to distribute food grains within the stipulated period (by May 31).

If the server is working properly, ration can be distributed to one person in 5 minutes. However, now due to server problems, it is not possible to distribute even 20 mandis of ration per day. In some cases, people are waiting and waiting and then going home. Devaraj, owner of a fair price shop, demanded that the government should immediately take steps to fix the server problem.

The Food Department's software was previously used by about 30 departments. This used to cause problems in the distribution of ration food grains due to server down problems. Now, even after the new software was implemented, the server problem has not been resolved and has worsened. The State Government Ration Distributors Association has demanded that the Food Department find a permanent solution to this.

There are a total of about 1.20 crore ration cards in the state, and 4.43 crore beneficiaries are benefiting from the Annabhagya scheme. Each beneficiary gets 5 kg of rice under the Central Government's Garib Kalyan Scheme and 5 kg of rice each under the State Government's Annabhagya Scheme, making a total of 10 kg of rice. Therefore, food grains are being distributed at a total of 20,500 ration distribution centers including CCS, VSSN, and Fair Price Depot.

"The server problem has eased a bit at around 2.15 pm on Thursday. I don't know how it will be in the coming days. How can ration be distributed to 40% of the people in the next two days. It would be good if the government supplies ration to fair price shops in the first week of the month as before," said Krishnappa, president of the Government Ration Distributors' Association.

## 'Resilient Neighbourhood': Begur chosen for pilot project

**CH NEWS,** Bengaluru

Begur, one of the city's heritage localities, has been selected as the pilot area for Bengaluru South City Corporation's (BSCC) new 'Resilient Neighbourhood' initiative. Under this, Begur will see implementation of Ward Climate Action Plan (WCAP), which has been conceived after stages of mapping and consultation with ward stakeholders.

The announcement was made during a workshop organised by the corporation for its engineers and officials to prepare the current year's action plan. Held at HSR Layout , the event marked a shift from the conventional style of budget implementation towards a more practical and impact-oriented approach.

The seven-point action plan focused on pedestrian infrastructure, elimination of garbage blackspots, safer roads, public spaces, climate resilience, protection of vulnerable sections and community participation. Key proposals included building and maintaining walkable footpaths, eliminating garbage blackspots, installing bollards and pedestrian crossings, improving street lighting and strengthening stormwater drain networks.

To address climate change and water scarcity, the corporation plans to promote rainwater harvesting, recharge wells, lake rejuvenation, scientific solid waste management, cool roofs and solar rooftops. Public spaces and green zones will also be expanded under the plan. BSCC Commissioner KN Ramesh urged officials to adopt a low investment, high impact approach and ensure that public priorities guide expenditure. He also stressed the importance of faster grievance redressal and stronger citizen engagement in civic services.

## HC grants bail to radiologist in POCSO case

**BENGALURU**

The High Court has granted bail to a radiologist from KR Pete in Mandya district who was booked under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (Pocso) Act, following an inspection conducted by Lokayukta at various scanning centres on April 17. The petitioner was arrested and arraigned as co-accused for his failure to comply with the mandatory duty of reporting the offence as provided under Section 19 of POCSO Act. The allegation against the petitioner is that a scanning procedure was conducted on a girl under the age of 18 at his centre.

# TCS-Mistral AI to build enterprise-grade custom AI models

**CH NEWS,** Bengaluru

TCS has entered a strategic partnership with French AI company Mistral AI, becoming the first global systems integrator partner for Mistral Forge, the company's enterprise AI platform for building frontier-grade AI models using proprietary enterprise knowledge and domain-specific data.As part of the collaboration, TCS will use Mistral Forge to build custom AI models for enterprises, enabling customers to combine their enterprise data and context to improve business decision-making. The partnership will leverage TCS' global presence across North America, the UK, Europe and Asia-Pacific to deliver AI solutions tailored to industry-specific operational and regulatory requirements.The initial focus will be on sectors such as banking, financial services and insurance (BFSI), manufacturing, healthcare and the public sector, where demand for trusted AI adoption is rising rapidly.TCS will also establish a centre of excellence (CoE) for Mistral to develop industry-specific solutions, support project delivery, and accelerate customer adoption through early access to Mistral's beta models. The Centre of Excellence will serve as a hub for advanced AI talent, training, and capabilities required to design, deploy and govern enterprise AI systems.Arthur Mensch said, TCS' global scale and contextual industry knowledge make them an ideal partner for Mistral.

Together, we are enabling enterprises worldwide to move from experimentation to AI deployment with systems that are open, production-ready and aligned with their strategic and operational requirements. K Krithivasan said the partnership reinforces TCS' commitment to scaling enterprise AI with trust, control and measurable business outcomes at the core. This partnership expands TCS' AI ecosystem, uniquely positioning TCS to create a differentiated solution proposition for our clients. Together with Mistral, we will solve specific industry challenges, regulatory requirements and sovereign needs for our enterprise customers, he said.

## Gang attack by new lover for hanging out with old lover

**CH NEWS,** Bengaluru

The recent gang attack on a car driver in Shanthinagar, has now taken a thrilling love story twist. A police investigation has revealed that a young woman's current lover, who could not tolerate her hanging out with her ex-boyfriend in a car, came with his baton and attacked her to death.

The Wilson Garden police, who sprang into action after the CCTV footage of the case went viral on social media, have now succeeded in arresting an accused.

On the morning of May 22, a gang of about 6 to 7 people had attacked a young man in a car on a public road with the intention of killing him.

The gruesome footage of the attack was captured on a local CCTV camera and went viral on social media, causing public outrage. As soon as the video went viral, the Wilson Garden police station immediately registered a complaint and started an investigation.

When the police questioned the driver Arfan who was attacked and searched the CCTV footage, the real love story behind this came to light. The young man named Arfan, who was attacked, was deeply in love with a young woman in the past. But due to some differences, the two broke up.

After breaking up with Arfan, the young woman fell in love with a new man named Manju. Currently, their lovey-dovey was going on loudly. However, recently, the young woman had started meeting her old lover Arfan again without the knowledge of her current lover Manju. In the early hours of May 22, the young woman and Arfan were roaming together in a car near Shantinagar.

Manju somehow finds out that his girlfriend is hanging out with her ex-lover Arfan in a car without telling him. Enraged by this, Manju decides to teach Arfan a lesson and rushes to the spot with his rowdy Patalam. Manju's gang of 6 to 7 people intercepts the car Arfan was driving near Shantinagar, pulls Arfan out of the car and brutally assaults him on the road.

The Wilson Garden police, who conducted an operation based on CCTV footage, have already arrested one of the accused in the gang of attackers.

## Traffic disruptions on Metro Purple line on Sunday

**BENGALURU**

There will be a temporary disruption in metro services between Deepanjali Nagar and Krantiveera Sangolli Rayanna (KSR) metro stations on May 31 due to necessary technical maintenance work being carried out on the section of our Metro Purple Line between Attiguppe and Vijayanagara stations.

The Bengaluru Metro Rail Corporation (BMRCL) has announced that metro train services between Deepanjali Nagar and Krantiveer Sangolli Rayanna (KSR) metro stations on the Purple Line will be temporarily suspended from 7 am to 9 am, for two hours, to facilitate smooth work.

During this period, normal services will be available from Chalaghatta to Mysore Road, from Krantiveera Sangolli Rayanna Station to Whitefield-Kadugodi, from Madavara to Silk Institute and from RV Road to Bommasandra.

Train services between Deepanjali Nagar and Krantiveer Sangolli Rayanna Metro stations on the entire Purple Line will resume from 9 am. BMRCL has requested passengers to plan their journeys keeping in mind this temporary service disruption.

There was also a traffic disruption on the Purple Line of the Metro on May 17 due to technical maintenance work.

OPERATIONAL PERIL

# *Rain risk: 890 trees shadow B'luru metro tracks*

**CH NEWS,** Bengaluru

Within a month, Namma Metro services have been disrupted three times, with heavy rain and gusty winds twice halting operations on parts of the network.

In the latest incident, commuters were stranded for nearly 30 minutes after a tree branch fell on the track between ITPB and Sathya Sai Hospital stations, forcing a suspension of services between Whitefield and Garudacharpalya. The disruption

affected passengers across 10 stations on the busy Whitefield corridor during peak evening hours. It also left commuters questioning why Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL) had not taken preventive measures, such as pruning tree branches that are very close to the elevated tracks. BMRCL officials said there are around 890 trees located close to the elevated viaducts on the Challaghatta–Whitefield and Silk Institute–Madavara corridors.

Of these, 100-odd ones stand within just 10 metres of the tracks. Officials maintained that periodic pruning is being carried out considering the operational risks posed by the trees during heavy rain and strong winds. On the Purple Line, 523 trees are located close to the viaduct, of which 35 are located within 10 metres, while 370 trees are located on the Green Line, and 71 within 10 metres. Officials claimed that on the elevated section of the Yellow Line from RV Road to Bommasandra, trees do not pose operational risks.

A BMRCL official said pruning of trees located close to Metro viaducts is carried out periodically, especially ahead of monsoon, to prevent branches from falling onto the tracks during heavy rain and high wind conditions.

## QUICK READ

### Lawyer RC Patil urges strict action against cow slaughter

**Naragunda**

Advocate R.C. Patil urged authorities to take strict measures to prevent illegal cow slaughter in the state. Speaking at Naragund in Gadag district, he said that although laws banning cow slaughter exist in the country, proper enforcement is lacking in Karnataka. He appealed to the taluk administration and police department to act immediately and issue public notices before Bakrid celebrations. The protest and memorandum submission were organized by Vishwa Hindu Parishad and Bajrang Dal at the Mini Vidhana Soudha. Farmer leader Nagesh Appoji stated that cows hold religious importance in India and demanded strict government action against illegal slaughter activities.

### Sandeep Patil takes charge as Northern Zone IGP

**Belagavi**

Senior IPS officer Sandeep Patil officially assumed charge as the Inspector General of Police, Northern Zone, The central office in Belagavi. Outgoing IGP Dr. Chetan Singh Rathore formally handed over responsibilities to Patil during the ceremony. Patil has earlier served as Superintendent of Police in Belagavi and is well acquainted with the region's policing challenges. His appointment is considered significant as the Northern Zone covers sensitive districts bordering Maharashtra and Goa. Officials said his prior experience in North Karnataka will help strengthen law and order and improve coordination across the region's police units.

### Five-Day advanced IPR training workshop announced in Gadag

**Gadag**

The Karnataka Science and Technology Academy has announced a five-day training workshop on Advanced Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) to be held from June 16 to June 20 at its office premises. The programme will feature lectures by eminent scientists and technologists from reputed institutions. It is open to science graduates, postgraduates, research scholars, lecturers, professors, science enthusiasts and representatives from the industrial sector. Interested participants can register online before June 12 through the provided link. For more information, coordinator V.G. Umesh (Mob: 9743084194) or the academy website may be contacted, according to a release issued by CEO Dr. Anand R.

# Court adjourns hearing on anticipatory bail plea in Swamiji case

Court adjourned hearing on anticipatory bail cancellation plea involving Vachanand Swamiji to June 3.

**DAVANAGERE**

The hearing on the petition seeking cancellation of anticipatory bail granted to Vachanand Swamiji has been adjourned by a court in connection with a POCSO case registered at Harihar Rural Police Station in Davanagere district.

The case relates to serious allegations of child abuse and exploitation, following a complaint lodged by the mother of a minor residing in the mutt. The police had earlier sought cancellation of the anticipatory bail granted by the district court on April 21 with certain conditions.

According to legal proceedings, the petition filed by the police was scheduled for hearing but has now been postponed to June 3. Meanwhile, the seer's legal counsel S. V. Patil submitted objections and clarified that the petitioner would not appear before the court during the proceedings.

The anticipatory bail was originally granted after the seer approached the district court fearing arrest in the POCSO case. Investigations in the matter have already included questioning and a medical examination of the accused.

The case has also seen administrative developments, including the transfer of the investigating officer following directions from senior police officials. Authorities continue to monitor the investigation process under supervision.

Allegations in the case include harassment and abusive behaviour towards children, which were reportedly brought to light after complaints were submitted by minors themselves. The Child Welfare Committee had also visited the mutt to assess the situation and conduct inquiries.

Separately, additional complaints have been filed alleging misuse of funds collected during religious events and financial irregularities within the mutt administration, further intensifying scrutiny around the institution.

The court will next take up the matter on June 3 for further hearing and consideration of the police plea.

## Gokak leaders demand cabinet rank for MLA Puttarangashetty

**GOKAK**

In Gokak political leaders and community representatives have intensified their demand urging the state leadership to include MLA C. Puttarangashetty in the upcoming cabinet expansion with a cabinet-rank ministerial position. The appeal has been made in the backdrop of ongoing discussions within the ruling Congress party regarding redistribution of portfolios and representation of various communities in the state government.

## Dharwad protest enters day 14 for separate corporation demand

**DHARWAD**

The indefinite strike demanding a separate municipal corporation for Dharwad has entered its 14th day, with protesters continuing their agitation outside the municipal corporation office in Dharwad.

The agitation is being led by the Dharwad Separate Corporation Struggle Forum, which is demanding the bifurcation of the Hubballi-Dharwad Municipal Corporation and the creation of an independent civic body for Dharwad city.

Protesters argue that a separate corporation is necessary for balanced development and better administrative focus on local civic issues. They raised slogans such as "Separate corporation is our demand" and "HDMC is enough, DMC is needed," highlighting their long-standing demand for administrative division.

Several community leaders and local representatives, including members of Ward 11 and representatives of the Hugar community, extended support to the protest. Supporters also submitted letters backing the agitation and joined the demonstrators at the protest site.

Prominent participants in the protest included Congress leaders Aravind Eganagoudar and others who observed a one-day hunger strike as part of the demonstration. Senior advocate B. D. Hiremath and several civic activists also participated, lending support to the movement.

The protesters maintained that Dharwad has long been seeking separate civic status to ensure faster development, improved governance, and fair allocation of resources.

# CEO Daljeet Kumar calls for holistic district development

**HAVERI**

Daljeet Kumar said that the primary objective of the district administration is the all-round development of Haveri district, focusing on drinking water, education, health, and other basic infrastructure needs through coordinated efforts of elected representatives and officials.

Speaking at a press briefing in the Zilla Panchayat video conference hall, he said several steps have already been taken to ensure drinking water supply during the summer season. A total of 91 private borewells have been identified, along with 82 new borewells and 13 borewells that have been flushed to address water scarcity issues in rural areas. He assured that no village in the district would face drinking water shortage.

He highlighted major multi-village drinking water supply projects worth ₹1,325 crore being implemented in the district. These projects aim to supply drinking water to hundreds of villages using water from the Tungabhadra river. One major project covering 291 villages is already 85.6% complete, with trial runs conducted and expected to be completed by August 2026.

Another project covering 51 villages is 96% complete, while a third project covering 109 villages is also progressing rapidly. These projects are expected to ensure long-term drinking water security for rural populations across multiple taluks.

**Daljeet Kumar urged coordinated efforts for drinking water, education, health, and rural development in Haveri district progress plans.**

Under the Jal Jeevan Mission, 706 out of 726 sanctioned works have been completed, with the remaining works in progress. The administration is also implementing ₹379.72 crore worth of scheme revival projects to improve rural water supply systems.

The CEO also reviewed progress under MGNREGA, noting the generation of 1.96 lakh person-days of employment out of a target of 5.81 lakh, with ₹6.41 crore already paid as wages. He said over 40,000 workers have been provided employment, with more than half being women.

He further discussed development in rural libraries, housing schemes, sanitation projects, livelihood programs, and tax collection progress. He emphasized that all government schemes must reach beneficiaries effectively and assured prompt action on public grievances related to drinking water and rural development.

*B. Sriramulu said Siddaramaiah was removed and humiliated through political pressure within Congress party.*

# SIDDARAMAIAH REMOVAL IS DISRESPECT SAYS SRIRAMULU

**BALLARI**

Former minister B. Sriramulu has alleged that Chief Minister Siddaramaiah was humiliated and removed from his post, claiming that the senior leader was subjected to continuous political pressure and denied a peaceful working environment over the past three years.

Speaking to reporters in Ballari, Sriramulu said that a leader who has governed the state for eight years should have been treated with respect. He alleged that political developments since the 2023 elections targeted Siddaramaiah, eventually leading to his resignation under what he described as a forced situation.

He further claimed that internal political dynamics within the Congress party gradually intensified, culminating in Siddaramaiah stepping down from the chief ministerial position. Sriramulu said he personally felt saddened after seeing the emotional condition of the veteran leader during the transition.

Indirectly criticizing Deputy Chief Minister D. K. Shivakumar and Congress national president Mallikarjun Kharge, he alleged that power struggles within the party led to the removal of Siddaramaiah from office. He questioned the Congress leadership for sidelining an OBC leader despite publicly advocating support for backward-class leaders.

Sriramulu also pointed out that Siddaramaiah enjoys strong support in the Kalyana Karnataka region and credited him with contributing significantly to the Congress party's electoral performance. He alleged that some leaders who benefited from Siddaramaiah's popularity are now aligning themselves with rival factions within the party. Comparing the situation with former Chief Minister B. S.

## Farmers demand reduction in fertilizer fuel prices protest

**SIRUGUPPA**

Farmers under the Samyukta Karnataka Horanata Samiti staged a protest in Siruguppa, demanding reduction in the prices of fertilizers, petrol, and diesel, and submitted a memorandum to Deputy Tahsildar Yakub.

The protest highlighted the increasing financial burden on farmers due to rising input costs. According to farmers, fuel prices have increased for the fourth time within 10 days, significantly affecting agricultural activities.

Farmer leaders said that the cost of tractor ploughing, irrigation pump usage, and crop transportation has gone up sharply due to the continuous rise in petrol and diesel prices. They also pointed out that fertilizer prices have increased, further adding to the economic strain on cultivation.

## HK Patil flags off new press vehicle in Gadag

**GADAG**

The new press vehicle of the Department of Information and Public Relations was officially launched in Gadag by district in-charge minister H. K. Patil at the Deputy Commissioner's office premises.

The minister inaugurated the vehicle by flagging it off, marking its induction for improved media communication and public information services in the district. Officials said the initiative aims to strengthen dissemination of government information to the public and ensure timely reporting of official programmes and developments.

The event was attended by several district-level officials, including Deputy Commissioner C. N. Sridhar, Superintendent of Police Rohan Jagadeesh, Additional Deputy Commissioner Durgesh K. R, and District Information Officer Vasanth Madlura. Local leaders and representatives of various government bodies were also present.

According to officials, the press vehicle will be used to facilitate coverage of government schemes, developmental activities, and public outreach programmes across rural and urban areas of Gadag district. It is expected to enhance coordination between the administration and media representatives.

Minister H. K. Patil emphasized the importance of transparent communication and said that strengthening information delivery systems helps ensure that government initiatives reach citizens effectively. He also highlighted the role of the media in creating awareness about welfare schemes.

The launch event was conducted in the presence of officials from various departments and representatives of public institutions. The initiative is part of broader efforts to improve communication infrastructure within the district administration.

## Mango farmers in Haveri face price crash crisis

**HAVERI**

The yield of mango crops has sharply declined in Haveri district, yet prices have not increased, creating a severe crisis for farmers. According to local estimates, mango production has dropped by nearly 80 percent in the district, forcing many growers to shift to alternative crops like arecanut and others.

Farmers say that unseasonal pre-monsoon rains, strong winds, and diseases affecting mango blossoms have severely reduced output this year. Despite the shortage in production, mango prices have fallen significantly compared to last year. While mangoes were sold for ₹200 to ₹300 per kg last year, current prices range between ₹100 and ₹200 per kg.

Due to repeated losses, many farmers are abandoning mango orchards and switching to more stable crops. The situation has been worsened by export disruptions, particularly due to conflicts in Middle Eastern countries, which has affected demand from international markets such as Iran and Gulf nations.

## Minister Mankal Vaidya assures education support for victims' children

**BHATKAL**

Families of victims who died after drowning while collecting shellfish in a river near Padushirali in Bhatkal taluk have received financial compensation from the government and other sources.

Minister Mankal Vaidya visited the bereaved families and personally handed over compensation cheques, offering condolences and support to them during the difficult time.

Each affected family received ₹15 lakh under the fisheries department compensation scheme. In addition, ₹5 lakh was provided from the Chief Minister's Relief Fund. The minister also contributed personal financial assistance to support the families.

He assured that the education expenses of the children from the affected families would be taken care of, promising continued support for their welfare and future needs.

District officials, including Deputy Commissioner K. Lakshmi Priya, and local Congress leaders accompanied the minister during the visit to the families' residences.

The incident occurred when individuals went into the river to collect shellfish and accidentally drowned, leading to the tragic deaths. Authorities have since extended financial aid and support measures to help the families recover from the loss.

**DHARWAD PROTEST MEMORANDUM**

# *Karnataka entry ban sought against Swamiji*

**DHARWAD**

A coalition named "Samanaatege Naavu" has submitted a memorandum demanding that Maharashtra-based Adrushya Kadasiddheshwar Swamiji be prevented from entering Karnataka, citing concerns over social harmony and constitutional values.

Speaking at Annigeri in Dharwad district, representatives of the group alleged that the swamiji's statements are against constitutional principles and

contradict the teachings of Basavanna and other Sharanas. They claimed such remarks are creating unrest and disturbing communal harmony in society.

The organization stated that the seer's speeches and public comments are provocative and may lead to law and order issues if he is allowed to continue visiting the state. They urged authorities to take preventive action to maintain peace and stability.

According to the memorandum, the group believes that strict measures are necessary to ensure that no individual or religious figure spreads messages that they consider divisive or misleading to the public. They appealed to the administration to prioritize public order and social harmony.

The representatives further argued that Karnataka has a strong tradition of progressive thought and equality rooted in the Basava philosophy. They said any message seen as opposing these values should not be permitted to influence the public.

The statement was issued by key members of the "Samanaatege Naavu" coalition, including Prof. S. S. Harlapur and Veeresh Shanbhogara. They emphasized that their demand is aimed at maintaining peace and preventing any potential disturbances in the region.

Authorities have acknowledged receipt of the memorandum, and further action on the request is expected to depend on legal and administrative review.

QUICK READ

## Subsidy applications open for horticulture farmers

**CH NEWS,** Gadag
The Horticulture Department has invited applications from farmers in Gad ag taluk to avail subsidy benefits under various schemes for the year 2026–27. The last date to apply is June 15. Under the National Horticulture Mission, support will be given for crops like banana, man go, papaya, pomegranate, lemon, guava, tamarind and others, along with flo wers and medicinal plan ts. Farmers can also apply for facilities such as drip irrigation support, plastic mulching, polyhouses, vermicomposting units, water harvesting structures and farm machinery.

## Haveri RTO honors dedicated social road volunteer

**CH NEWS,** Haveri
Abdulkhadar Hazratsaab Dharwad, a social worker from the city, was felicitated by the Haveri Regional Transport Office for his selfless service in helping injured accident victims, orphans and needy people reach hospitals. He has been serving for about 11 years with the motto service is the supreme religion. The RTO office appreciated his efforts and presented a felicitation letter as encouragement for humanitarian work. On the occasion, Regional Transport Officer Ku Vinay Katokar R and staff members Shripad Byashi, Mehboobali Hotegashi and Shambhuli Gaya Hosalli Math were present.

## MLA launches rural development works at Kodiyallapur

**CH NEWS,** HANAGAL
In Kodiyallapur village of Hanagal taluk MLA Srinivas Mane performed the foundation stone laying ceremony for various development works worth Rs 10 lakh under the Chief Minister's Infrastructure Development Programme 2025-26. Earlier, funds were not allocated transparently and were decided from one place, but now this system has changed and money is released based on villagers opinions and priorities. MLA Mane said that leaders visit villages, listen to pez ple and allocate funds for priority public works such as CC roads, drains and culverts in rural areas. Several leaders and officials were present on the occasion including Taluk Guarantee Implementation Committee president Eerappa Bailawala KPCC member Takanagouda Patil Block Congress president Manju Gorannavara and others.

# Organic Mango-Jackfruit mela in Mysuru from May 29 t0 31

### Fair organised by Horticulture Dept under Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana aims to help farmers get better market opportunities for traditional,organic agriculture

**MYSURU**

A vibrant celebration of organic farming, natural living and rural traditions will come alive in Mysuru as the three-day "Organic Mango and Jackfruit Fair" gets underway from May 29 to 31 at Nexus Centre City Mall in Mysuru.

The fair is being organised jointly by the Horticulture Department under the Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY) scheme with the objective of providing better market opportunities for farmers practicing traditional and organic agriculture, said Joint Director of Horticulture Manjunath Angadi.

Addressing a news conference here on Wednesday, he noted that last year's three-day Organic Mango and Jackfruit Fair held at Lalbagh Botanical Garden had received an overwhelming response, prompting organisers to bring the colourful celebration to Mysuru this year with added attractions and activities. Apart from a wide range of organic mangoes and jackfruits, the fair will feature stalls displaying and selling organic food products, value-added farm produce, traditional snacks and eco-friendly goods. Farmers will get a direct platform to market naturally grown fruits to consumers.

Special live demonstrations on preparing mango- and jackfruit-based dishes will also be organised, allowing visitors to taste and purchase the delicacies. Families of farmers from different parts of the state will introduce regional cuisines and traditional food cultures during the event. Another major attraction will be displays of garments and handicrafts made using natural and organic dyes. Organisers will also demonstrate the production, collection and processing methods involved in creating these eco-friendly products.

Workshops on urban gardening, natural soap-making and eco-friendly detergents will be conducted for the public. Experts will demonstrate how native plant varieties can be grown in household spaces and how natural raw materials can be used to prepare daily-use cleaning products.

President of the Biological Society Dr. Ramakrishna said the exhibition will showcase more than 80 local and international mango varieties and over 35 varieties of jackfruit.

"The event is designed to educate the younger generation about the diversity of mangoes and jackfruits found across Karnataka, methods of identifying varieties, and the efforts of farmers who are conserving these precious plant species," he said.

Visitors will also learn about the unique qualities of different varieties, including the famous Tipu Badami mangoes and the diverse jackfruit varieties of Alur, along with information on the climatic conditions best suited for their cultivation and the process of naturally ripening fruits.

The organisers said the fair would offer visitors a sensory experience by highlighting the differences in aroma, colour and taste among various naturally grown fruits.

Raitha Santhe member Kavitha Srinivasan said children would be encouraged to participate in drawing activities based on themes such as natural farming, environmental conservation and livestock rearing.

To promote traditional rural lifestyles, live demonstrations of clay pot-making — considered an integral part of village culture — will also be organised during the fair.

As part of the cultural programmes for children, the play "Pippigondu Pappi," written and directed by noted theatre personality Prasanna Heggodu, will be staged by Bharatiya Shikshana Samsthe, Mysuru, on May 30 from 7 pm to 8 pm.

Members of the Biological Society, including Sahani and Darshan A.M., were present during the announcement of the event.

# Lightning claims three lives, cow dead

**MYSURU**

Mysuru district witnessed a tragic spell of rain-related deaths in the last 24 hours, with three persons — including two men and a farm woman — and a cow losing their lives after being struck by lightning in separate incidents across the district.

In a heartbreaking incident near Yelwal on the outskirts of Mysuru on Tuesday, 43-year-old Roshan, a techie working in Bengaluru and a native of Madikeri in Kodagu district, died after lightning struck him while he was plucking mangoes on his roadside property. Sources said Roshan had entered the farmland during rain when the lightning bolt hit the tree area, leaving him critically injured.

He was initially rushed to a nearby hospital and later shifted to the Jayadeva Institute of Cardiovascular Sciences, whe re doctors declared him brou ght dead. Police said a postmor tem was conducted to ascertain the exact cause of death. Ilwala Police have registered a case and launched an investigation.

Another shocking incident was reported from Maladahaadi village in H.D. Kote taluk, where Appaiah, son of late Subbaiah, died on the spot after lightning struck him around 1 pm on Wednesday. Villagers said he had taken shelter beneath a tree to escape the sudden downpour when the tragedy occurred.

At almost the same time, a cow was killed instantly in Nooralakuppe village of H.D. Kote taluk after being struck by lightning during heavy rain. The cattle owner has appealed to the district administration for compensation.

In yet another tragedy, Yashodamma, a farm woman from Hosapura village in Kasaba Hobli of Hunsur taluk, died after lightning struck her around 1.30 pm. Revenue and taluk administration officials visited the spot and initiated formalities. What has alarmed authorities is the common pattern in all the incidents — the victims had reportedly taken shelter under trees during rain.

"People must strictly avoid standing under trees, electric poles or near power installations during thunderstorms. These become high-risk lightning conductors," disaster management experts repeatedly caution. A senior district administration official said, "All incidents have been reported to the disaster management cell. Necessary procedures, including compensation and awareness measures, are being taken up."

Local residents have urged the administration to intensify public awareness campaigns, especially in rural areas where people often seek temporary shelter under trees during sudden rain spells. With monsoon activity intensifying across the region, officials have appealed to citizens to remain indoors during thunderstorms and follow weather advisories strictly.

# Rising diesel prices hit cultivation costs severely

**HUNSUR**

**Farmers in Hunsur and H D Kote taluks raised concerns that forest department objections are blocking land repair; they demand joint survey with revenue department**

Farmers in Hunsur staged a protest in front of the taluk office against rising prices of fertilizers, diesel and petrol, demanding urgent relief from both state and central governments.

District President of Karnataka State Farmers' Association Hosur Kumar said that the price hike in diesel and fertilizers has severely affected farmers preparing for the monsoon and post monsoon season.

Due to continuous increase in diesel prices, the cost of tractor ploughing, irrigation pump usage and crop transport has doubled, while fertilizer prices have also risen sharply making cultivation difficult for small and middle class farmers.They said urea shortage is increasing due to diversion of agricultural fertilizer to plywood factories and demanded strict action against illegal movement of urea and proper enforcement to stop misuse.

Farmers also raised concern over land repair issues in Hunsur and H D Kote taluks where forest department objections are stopping maintenance work on long cultivated lands requiring joint survey by revenue and forest departments.

The protestors urged authorities to address farmers' demands immediately to reduce financial burden and ensure smooth agricultural activities in the coming season.

A petition was submitted to the central and state governments through Sub Divisional Officer Kavya Rani highlighting demands for price control action on fertilizer diversion and resolution of land survey disputes while urging immediate government intervention to protect farmers livelihood and agricultural sustainability in the region. Several farmer leaders including taluk and district office bearers participated in the protest and supported the demands raising slogans and calling for urgent relief measures from authorities for the farming community affected by rising input costs in the region.

*Activists said Karnataka has right to implement Mekedatu project; urged central government support inter-state water sharing development*

# Slogans raised against Mekedatu project objection

**CHAMARAJANAGAR**

Pro Kannada organisations staged a protest in Chamarajanagar against Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Joseph Vijay over opposition to the Mekedatu project. Members of pro Kannada groups gathered at Sri Bhuvaneshwari Watta and raised slogans against the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, demanding withdrawal of objections to the project.

Karnataka Army State President Ch R Srinivasa Gowda said that Tamil Nadu leaders have always opposed Karnataka development projects in border regions. He said Mekedatu project will provide drinking water and irrigation benefits to several districts and opposition is unnecessary and politically motivated.

He warned that continued opposition will intensify protests in Karnataka and pro Kannada organisations will expand their agitation if required.

Activists said Karnataka has the right to implement the project and urged the central government to support inter-state water sharing development. Many Kannada activists including local leaders participated in the protest and raised slogans demanding justice and early approval of the Mekedatu project.

Officials said the protest remained peaceful and police were deployed to maintain law and order in the city.

They added that traffic movement was not affected and no untoward incidents were reported dur ing the demonstration. Leaders of pro Kannada organisations said they will continue to oppose any move that blocks the Mekedatu project and will hold further awareness campaigns across districts.

They urged both state and central governments to resolve the dispute quickly and ensure drinking water supply for Bengaluru and surrounding regions.

# Cooperatives urged to strengthen honest development work

**KOPPAL**

District Cooperative Union President Shekharagowda Mali Patil said that honest work in cooperative societies can strengthen and develop the cooperative system in the district.

He was speaking at a special one day cooperative training program organised by the Cooperative Department Karnataka State Cooperative Federation Bengaluru and District Cooperative Union Koppal for chief executives and staff of selected cooperative societies.

The program was inaugurated by Halaiah Hudejali Vice President of the District Cooperative Union who watered a sapling and encouraged participants to attend all training sessions and apply knowledge for the benefit of members and society.

Speakers and officials highlighted the importance of transparency accountability and member service in cooperative institutions and said that cooperation and training will help improve performance and strengthen rural economic development across the district.

Union chief executive officer Akshay Kumar welcomed guests lecturers delivered sessions on various topics and the program concluded with a vote of thanks and coordination by cooperative department staff.

Officials said that cooperative societies play an important role in rural development and urged all members to work honestly use training effectively and ensure that benefits reach every member through transparent administration and collective responsibility for sustainable growth in the district. They added that such programs will improve efficiency reduce mismanagement and strengthen financial stability of cooperative institutions while encouraging active participation of youth women and farmers in decision making processes and promoting long term economic progress at the grassroots level across all cooperative bodies in the region. They emphasized accountability and continuous improvement in cooperative governance for future sustainability through regular training programs and member participation initiatives.

# Mandya police honoured for rescuing missing children

**MANDYA**

A special review meeting was organised in Mandya to discuss efforts to trace and rescue missing children across the district. The meeting was conducted jointly by the district administration, police department, district panchayat, legal services authority, women and child welfare department, and child protection unit.

District Superintendent of Police V.J. Shobharani praised police officers for their dedicated work in finding and safely rescuing several missing children. She appreciated the efforts of teams working under Nagar West, Mandya Taluk, Malavalli Town, Srirangapatna Town, Mandya East, Arakere, Mandya Central, Kikkeri, and K.R.S. police stations. Officers involved in the rescue operations were honoured with certificates and cash rewards for their service.

District Legal Services Authority Member Secretary M. Anand, ASP Gangadharaswamy, District Child Protection Officer Mohammed, Child Welfare Committee Chairperson Sumitra, member Nandish, board member Komala, and several officials attended the meeting. Officials said the coordinated effort between departments has improved child safety in the district and helped families reunite with their children more quickly after complaints were registered.

# Datta peetha awards presented to scholars

**MYSURU**

The 84th birthday celebrations of revered Sri Ganapati Sachchidananda Swamiji and the 28th anniversary of Nadamandapa are being observed in a meaningful manner at Sri Avadhoota Datta Peetham and Sri Ganapati Sachchidananda Ashrama.

On Wednesday, on the occasion of Adhika Jyeshtha Shuddha Ekadashi, Rudra Homa, Ayushya Homa and Rudrabhisheka were performed at 7 am.

At 10 am, ceremonial Pada puja was performed to Parama poojya Sri Ganapati Sachchidananda Swamiji in the presence of junior pontiff Sri Datta Vijayananda Teertha Swamiji as per scriptural traditions.

Later, the Chaitanyarchane and Datta Peetha Awards presentation programme was held. It was noteworthy that the Datta Peetha Awards were presented to deserving personalities identified from Karnataka to Kashmir.'Veda Nidhi' award was conferred on V. Jambunatha Ganapathi. A native of Coimbatore in Tamil Nadu, he is a scholar of Vedic studies and had also lived in Mysuru for many years.

'Shastra Nidhi' award was presented to Kuppa Vishwanatha Sharma of Tirupati. He is well versed in Vedanta Shastra and Bhagavad Gita, a grammar scholar, editor of Bhaktimala magazine and notably holds two PhDs.

'Nada Nidhi' award was conferred on Vidwan Suresh Vaidyanathan from Chennai, Tamil Nadu. He is renowned in Ghatam and Carnatic music and is an Asthana Vidwan of Datta Peetham.

'Pravachana Chakravarti' award was presented to Samavedam Shanmukha Sharma of Hyderabad. He is an Asthana Vidwan of Kanchi Kamakoti Vidyapeetham and has delivered discourses in nearly 25 countries. He is proficient in Brahmasutra and Bhagavad Gita. 'Dharma Bandhu' award was conferred on Ravinder Pandita, a Kashmiri Pandit popularly known as Bharata Bandhu. He is a propagator of Sanatana Dharma and has worked for the preservation of Sharada Peeth. 'Sasya Bandhu' award was presented to Smt. Anupama Vedachala from Karnataka, currently residing in Be ngaluru. She is well known in Bonsai art and has promoted the art form internationally as well.

# Soul knowledge removes fear of death opinion: Shivamaniji

**CHAMARAJANAGAR**

Rajyogini Brahmakumari Shivamaniji said that people aro und the world are afraid of dea th and try many ways to escape it. She spoke at the inauguration of the Bhagavad Gita and Shiva Yoga discourse program at Prajapita Brahmakumari Ishwariya University in Chamarajanagar city.

She said the essence of the Bhagavad Gita is the cycle of birth and death and there is no need to fear death. She explained that lack of knowledge about the soul creates fear and sorrow. The soul enters a body at birth and leaves it at death like changing clothes and it is never destroyed.

Mahadevaswamy district president said children should learn good values and not focus only on money.

QUICK READ

## Giant python spotted blocking forest road night

**CH NEWS,** MADIKERI

A chilling video has gone viral after a massive python was spotted crossing a forest road in Kodagu district. The incident occurred near the Aiguru Gram Panchayat limits in Somwarpet taluk. Local resident Prakash Belliappa was driving home with his family from Kushalnagar when his headlights illuminated the giant reptile slithering across the Sajjalli-Yadavanadu connecting road. The unexpected encounter left the motorists terrified, halting traffic completely. Forest officials have urged night travelers to drive cautiously, reminding everyone to respect wildlife and allow animals to cross safely without interference.

## Mariyappa college hosts farewell for retiring principal

**CH NEWS,** NAREGAL

A grand farewell ceremony has been organized to honor the retirement of a beloved local academic leader. Prof. S. L. Guledagudda, the long-serving Principal of Mariyappa Balappa Kalakonnavar Government First Grade College, is officially stepping down from his post. The celebration will take place inside the main college auditorium on Saturday, May 30, starting at 11:00 AM. Following his departure, senior professor Jayashree Muthagara will officially take charge as the institution's new principal. All department heads, faculty members, and college staff will attend to celebrate his dedicated career.

## Manoj Kadaba honored as career ambassador

**CH NEWS,** UDUPI

Manoj Kadaba, Head of Shefins Academy, was officially crowned Udupi's "Career Guidance Ambassador" by the School Education Department. The prestigious honor recognizes Kadaba's dedication to building student counseling cells across the district through the local DIET division. Renowned spiritual leader Sri Sri Vee reshananda Saraswati Swamiji presented the award during a high sch ool headmasters' workshop held at the MIT Library Auditorium in Manipal. Udupi Zilla Panchayat CEO Prateek Bayal presided over the ceremony, highlighting that systematic career guidance in schools is vital for motivating students toward higher achievements.

# Prof. Shivaramu credits rural folk for Kannada's survival

Prof. V.N. Shivaramu credited illiterate rural folk for Kannada's survival, claiming educated scholars contributed nothing to the language.

**KRISHNAPURADODDI**

In a bold statement, Prof. V. N. Shivaramu, Academic Director of IFRO Folklore College, asserted that educated scholars have contributed nothing to the Kannada language. Instead, he credited its rich survival entirely to illiterate rural folks and their artistic skills.

He was speaking at the inauguration of a four-day Sobane Geeta training camp organized by the Bangalore South District Kannada Sahitya Parishad. Prof. Shivaramu explained that while highly educated scholars remain isolated in their research, the melodious performances of traditional folk artists possess a unique power to attract crowds globally.

Sharing this sentiment, Trust Secretary Dr. M. Byre Gowda criticized how modern, trained musicians use limited talent to gain fame as international artists. In contrast, genuine folk artists compose from memory and sing for days using just their natural voices. He warned that traditional folklore can only be saved when these authentic, grassroots creators are brought into the mainstream.

Cultural thinker Sachi Gangadharaiah also expressed deep concern over the collapse of the joint family system, which has severely damaged the transmission of heritage. Adding to this, Karnataka Janapada Academy member Dr. Kempamma noted that while folk songs traditionally guided humans from birth to death, they are tragically losing their original form today.

The event was presided over by Parishad District President B.T. Nagesh, with several veteran artists and fifteen trainees from across Bangalore attending the cultural camp.

# IGNOU term end exams start from June 1st

**VIJAYAPURA**

The upcoming Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) Term End Examinations for June 2026 are scheduled to begin on June 1 and will run through July 21. The announcement was officially released by the Assistant Director's Office of the Department of News and Public Relations in Vijayapura.

According to the official notification, the examinations will cover both Open and Distance Learning (ODL) formats as well as modern online modes. To ensure a smooth process for all candidates, the university has set up five designated examination centers operating under the jurisdiction of the Vijayapura Regional Centre. These centers are strategically located across major regional hubs, including Vijayapura, Dharwad, Belgaum, Kalaburagi, and Solapur.

The department has advised all registered students to prepare well in advance for the month-long evaluation process. To gain entry into the examination halls, candidates must possess their official hall tickets. Students can now easily access and download their mandatory admit cards online by visiting the official university portal and clicking on the designated examination link.

Local educational authorities have finalized all necessary logistical arrangements at the five designated regional centers to ensure that the examinations are conducted in a fair, organized, and peaceful manner.

Students are highly encouraged to download their hall tickets early to verify their specific center details, dates, and session timings, thereby avoiding any last-minute technical glitches or confusion on the opening day of the examination.

*The Ministry of Home Affairs issued an urgent five-day weather warning for fishermen due to turbulent coastal sea conditions*

# Fishermen warned of rough sea conditions

**UDUPI**

The Ministry of Home Affairs has issued an urgent five-day weather warning for fishermen due to turbulent sea conditions. Rough weather and strong winds are expected across the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal till next Wednesday.

In the Arabian Sea, squally winds ranging from 45 to 55 kmph, with gusts hitting up to 65 kmph, will impact the south Gujarat and Pakistan coasts initially. This harsh weather will also sweep across the Somalia and Oman coasts over the weekend and early next week. Meanwhile, the Bay of Bengal will face equally challenging conditions, featuring wind speeds between 40 and 50 kmph and gusts reaching up to 60 kmph. These treacherous winds will heavily affect the Gulf of Mannar, Comorin area, and the coasts of Tamil Nadu, Sri Lanka, Odisha, and West Bengal.

As the rough weather spreads, emergency control rooms have alerted several coastal states and territories. Authorities in Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, and West Bengal, alongside Puducherry and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, are on high alert.

The government strongly advises fishing communities to avoid venturing into these deep waters during this high-risk period. Disaster management teams are monitoring the situation continuously to ensure coastal safety and prevent any maritime mishaps. Marine vessels currently at sea are urged to return to safer shores immediately.

# MLA Beldale inspecets faulty ration distribution center in Mangalagi

**BIDAR**

Stepping in to resolve growing public frustration, Bidar South MLA Dr. Shailendra Beldale made a surprise visit to the government ration distribution center in Mangalagi village. The inspection followed numerous complaints from local beneficiaries regarding severe technical glitches in the food grain distribution system.

During his visit, Dr. Beldale interacted directly with poor and middle-class residents, listening to their grievances regarding the recurring software errors. Realizing that these systemic technical failures were plaguing ration centers across the entire constituency, the MLA immediately contacted senior food department officials over the phone. He issued strict directives to rectify the network and software errors immediately to prevent further public harassment.

**Bidar South MLA Dr. Shailendra Beldale inspected Mangalagi's ration center following technical glitches, demanding officials fix software errors and resume halted state Annabhagya rice.**

"The ration system is a vital lifeline for marginalized families," Dr. Beldale emphasized. "Beneficiaries must not face unnecessary hardships to claim food grains that are rightfully theirs. It is the absolute responsibility of local officials to ensure complete transparency and timely service."

Public anger has intensified this month because the center is only distributing a combined 10 kg of rice under the central government's two-month quota. Residents expressed deep dissatisfaction as the Karnataka state government has suddenly halted its additional share of the Annabhagya scheme rice. Dr. Beldale strongly condemned this disruption and demanded that the state government resume its supply without further delay.

Reassuring the anxious villagers, the lawmaker reiterated that his top priority remains responding swiftly to grassroots issues and protecting public interest. Media coordinator Nagesh Sidda accompanied the MLA during the oversight visit.

# MP Capt Brijesh Chowta urges extension of three Mangaluru bus routes

**MANGALURU**

In a proactive move to address the city's growing public transit needs, Mangaluru MP Capt Brijesh Chowta has officially urged the district administration to extend three major city bus routes.

In a formal letter addressed to the Deputy Commissioner, the MP outlined specific route modifications to enhance connectivity for workers, students, and tourists. His recommendations include:

- **Route No. 5:** Extension from Morgans Gate to Jeppinamogaru.
- **Route No. 7:** Extension from Urwa Stores to the Baikampady Industrial Area, a move aimed at directly helping industrial workers and daily commuters.
- **Route No. 13:** Extension into the interior areas of Panambur Beach to provide seamless, direct connectivity for both domestic and international tourists.

"The city is growing rapidly, but several city buses are still operating on old and shorter routes," Capt Chowta stated. He highlighted that the current outdated routes fail to meet the transport demands of an expanding population and subsequently cause financial losses to bus operators.

The MP emphasized that extending these three specific corridors would significantly benefit daily employees and students while simultaneously boosting coastal tourism by providing hassle-free access to major beach destinations.

Acting promptly on the lawmaker's proposal, the Deputy Commissioner's office has officially written to senior transport department officials.

They have been directed to place the route extension matter urgently before the upcoming Regional Transport Authority (RTA) meeting to finalize the decision.

## Vijayapura faces water and power disruptions

**VIJAYAPURA**

Residents of Vijayapura city will face temporary disruptions in water and power supplies over the weekend due to urgent repair and infrastructure works. Local civic authorities have requested the public to store essentials and cooperate.

The Karnataka Urban Water Supply and Sewerage Board announced a major water supply cutoff on May 30 and 31. The disruption affects all areas connected to the Kolhara Pure Drinking Water Unit and the Jalnagar pump house. Maintenance teams are undertaking critical leakage repair works at multiple locations along the massive main pipeline, including Honyal Lake, Iranna Gudi, Garasangi Halla, Jagdal Thota, and Jumanal Cross. Neighborhoods near the Prayer School, Karma Cafe, and Ayurgram Hospital will experience dry taps during these two days.

Simultaneously, a major power outage is scheduled for Sunday, May 31, affecting parts of the city.

# Wild elephants rampage through Chikkamagaluru plantations

**CHIKKAMAGALURU**

A sudden resurgence of wild elephant attacks has gripped various parts of N.R. Pura taluk, destroying extensive coffee plantations and leaving local farmers terrified for their lives.

A herd of five wild elephan ts, including calves, has curren tly set up camp at the Vaddigu dda Estate near Kadavanthi. Invading the properties under the cover of darkness, the herd is systematically trampling and destroying valuable coffee, areca nut, and banana crops. Simultaneously, a dangerous lone tusker was spotted roaming near the roads at Marathi Camp near Umblebailu, further escalating tension.

Local farmer Naveen Gowda revealed that the jumbos have split into three distinct groups, frequently attacking villages like Karagane, Saragod, and Bidre. The continuous presen ce of these large mammals has disrupted daily life, leaving laborers too frightened to harvest crops and parents anxious about sending their children to school. Villagers expressed deep dissatisfaction with the Forest De partment. Although forest officials briefly visited the sites to drive the elephants back, residents alleged that the animals returned within hours. The community is now demanding immediate government compensation for their severe crop losses and continuous patrolling in forest-bordering villages.

"The Forest Department must take permanent measures," Gowda urged, emphasizi ng the critical need for deep trenches and solar-powered fences along the forest boundaries.

## Power supply disruptions announced across Mandya villages

**MANDYA**

Several villages across Mandya district will face scheduled power outages due to essential maintenance and emergency infrastructure work.

The first blackout hits on May 30, from 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM. Affected areas include Gopalapur, H. Kodihalli, H. Malligere, Jeegundipatna, and B. Hosur Colony, as engineers complete crucial link line work.

A second outage is scheduled for June 2 from 9:00 AM to 6:00 PM. This shutdown will affect the F-07 Pura feeder route under the Kolkaranadoddy power distribution center to facilitate urgent emergency repairs, authorities announced.

HIGH-SPEED MOUNTAIN TRIAL

# *Ghat Section Trials Begin In June*

**MANGALURU**

A specialist team from the Railway Ministry will start crucial trial runs on the newly electrified Sakleshpur-Subrahmanya Road ghat section during the first week of June. This important testing process is the final step before the railway line is officially declared ready for regular electric train operations.

If these upcoming tests are successful, it will finally clear the path for the highly anticipated Bengaluru-Mangaluru Vande Bharat Express. Railway Minister V. Somanna previously announced that this high-speed train service is scheduled to launch sometime in June.

The upcoming trial is being led by the Research Design and Standards Organisation. They plan to test various types of passenger and freight trains with different weight loads starting June 1. The Mysuru division has already completed initial test runs using an empty electric engine and passenger coaches.

This specific 55-kilometer mountain stretch is famously one of the most difficult and challenging terrains in the entire Indian Railways network. It features a very steep climb, alongside 57 tunnels, 258 bridges, and 108 incredibly sharp curves. Because the area is also highly prone to dangerous landslides, installing the electric lines was a massive engineering challenge.

The entire electrification project for the region cost over 729 crore rupees, with the difficult ghat section alone costing over 93 crore rupees. Engineers designed the new overhead power lines to safely support train speeds of up to 120 kilometers per hour, promising faster and greener travel for passengers soon.

# Kuruba Samaj slams Congress over leadership change

**VIJAYAPURA**

District leaders of the Kuruba Samaj have launched a fierce attack on the Congress high command, accusing the party of grave injustice again st backward classes and Dalit communities following the removal of Siddaramaiah from the Chief Minister's post.

In a joint press statement, Babaleshwar constituency Kuruba Samaj District Vice Presidents Santosh Kuradadi and Bhimana Gowda Biradar strongly condemned the party's dual policies.

They stated that downgrading an unquestionable leader like Siddaramaiah is an absolute insult to the entire Kuruba community, proving that Congress merely views them as a secure vote bank.

The leaders further targeted the party's hypocrisy regarding social justice.

They argued that if the high command insisted on replacing Siddaramaiah, they should have at least appointed a capable leader from the Dalit community as Chief Minister. Failing to do so proves that the party uses marginalized groups solely as a stepping stone to power.

"Siddaramaiah's hard work and massive charisma are the true reasons Congress won a majority in Karnataka," the vice presidents noted, claiming that central leaders have effectively stabbed backward classes in the back.

They criticized the party's stepmotherly attitude, accusing them of intentionally cornering grassroots leaders who built the party during difficult times.

Issuing a stern warning, Kuradadi and Biradar declared that the exploited classes across the state would not tolerate this betrayal. They urged the community's youth to unite against this political suppression and promised to teach the Congress party a proper lesson in the coming days.

## QUICK READ

### Bhatkal disaster victims receive 11 crore relief

**CH NEWS,** KARWAR
The District Information Department arranged a special vehicle for media personnel, to cover the government's compensation distribution program in Bhatkal wich happened on May 29th. Fisheries and District In-charge Minister Mankal Vaidya personally visited the homes of the victims to hand over the financial aid. The government has sanctioned a total compensation package of 1.10 crore to support the grieving families of the eleven individuals who tragically lost their lives in the recent frog shell disaster. Under this relief package, each affected family will receive a total financial assistance of 10 lakh. This includes a 5 lakh ex-gratia payment from the state government, combined with an additional 5 lakh provided by the Fisheries Department.

### Koppal Brahmin Mahasabha hosts talent awards

**CH NEWS,** KOPPAL
The district unit of the All Karnataka Brahmin Mahasabha is organizing a talent award ceremony and membership drive on 30th May. The grand event will begin at 5:30 PM inside the auditorium located behind the Vitthalakrishna Commercial Complex on Kinnal Road. State President S. Raghunath and district representative Gururaj N. Joshi will headline the prestigious gathering. According to organizers, the evening features traditional Vedaghosha chants, prayers, and community honors. Meritorious students will receive talent awards, while prominent local achievers from various fields will be felicitated for their outstanding contributions.

### Udupi to host rally for Environment Day

**CH NEWS,** UDUPI
To celebrate World Environment Day, the Karnataka State Pollution Control Board's Udupi office is organizing a massive environmental awareness rally on June 5. The event, scheduled to launch at 8:30 AM, will begin at the Gyansudha PU College Ground in Manipal. Participants will march to the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Auditorium, located inside the Rajatadri District Collectorate Complex. According to an official statement from regional environment officers, a formal community awareness meeting will take place at the auditorium immediately following the rally to discuss critical local conservation efforts.

# Hiremugadur village hosts inspiring book campaign

The Amma organization launched a village book reading campaign honoring late education officer Sivananda Badashetti by distributing free books.

**SAVANUR**

The Amma organization launched an inspiring book reading campaign in Hiremugadur village. The special drive honors late Sivananda Badashetti, a beloved book lover who served faithfully as the Taluk's Field Physical Education Officer for twenty years.

To spark a passion for reading among young students, organizers distributed free books to the Government Higher Primary School. The generous initiative quickly expanded across the region, delivering valuable reading materials to TMAES High School and the local Gram Panchayat Library.

The event also focused on celebrating the teachers and welcoming the children. Continuing a sweet annual tradition, the Amma organization gifted pens to the school faculty and distributed chocolates to the excited students while sharing warm blessings for the upcoming academic year.

Many community leaders gathered to support the cause, including Ningappa M.A.R. from the Amma Institute. Dedicated school teachers Veeresh Sherewad, G. Mallappa, Vijayakumar Patil, and Mahesh Sangur actively participated. They were joined by village secretary Hanamanthappa Sangur, school administrator Kavita Somasagar, alongside Vithoba A.R., Guddappa A., and Veeresh Talwara.

Organizers hope this campaign will encourage children to put down screens and pick up books. By transforming grief into a positive community gift, the organization ensures Badashetti's lifelong passion for literature continues to shape young minds. This beautiful tribute helps poor rural students access quality books, fostering a brighter and more knowledgeable future for the entire village.

# Udupi rain brings relief with zero damage

**UDUPI**

Residents across Udupi district breathed a sigh of relief as the region experienced light rainfall with absolutely no reports of property damage, flooding, or casualties. According to the official status report released by the district administration, life remains completely normal across all towns and villages.

The preliminary disaster management report confirmed that there have been no human casualties, injuries from lightning strikes, or loss of livestock anywhere in the district. Furthermore, local authorities stated that infrastructure remains fully intact, with zero instances of house collapses, damaged roads, breached lakes, or power supply disruptions. No relief camps were required, as no villages faced displacement. Major water reservoirs also maintained safe inflow and outflow levels.

While the skies remained cloudy, the actual precipitation was minimal. The district recorded an insignificant average rainfall of just 0.9 mm over the last 24 hours. Breaking down the numbers by taluks, Karkala received the highest with 2.3 mm, followed by Hebri at 1.8 mm. Other areas witnessed negligible showers, with Byndoor recording 0.4 mm, Kundapura 0.3 mm, and Udupi, Brahmavara, and Kaup each registering a mere 0.1 mm.

The Udupi District Collector's office issued this update to assure citizens that all safety parameters are stable. With the monsoon season looming, the current peaceful weather allows local administrative teams to remain prepared without any immediate crisis. For now, the coastal district enjoys a cool, calm atmosphere with standard routine activities continuing uninterrupted.

# MLA launches infrastructure upgrades in Shigihalli

**HANAGAL**

**MLA Srinivas Mane launched 20 lakh infrastructure projects in Shigihalli, while raising critical concerns over policy changes altering the national rural employment guarantee scheme.**

Member of the Legislative Assembly Srinivas Mane officially launched several rural development projects worth twenty lakh rupees. The ground-breaking ceremony took place in Shigihalli village under the Chief Minister's Infrastructure Development Program for 2025-26.

Speaking at the event, MLA Mane emphasized that improving basic facilities in rural areas naturally boosts local trade, commerce, and economic activities. However, he expressed strong concerns regarding recent policy changes to the Mahatma Gandhi National Employment Guarantee Scheme.

He noted that the central scheme previously offered great opportunities to implement large-scale rural development projects. Mane warned that the altered nature of the program will cause widespread inconvenience, making both infrastructure growth and securing stable jobs for rural laborers much harder moving forward.

The significant community event drew several prominent local leaders. Notable attendees included Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee member Takanagouda Patil and Block Congress President Manju Gora nnavara. Local leaders Mallappa Kori, Bharamanna Shivoor, Anita Shivoor, Iranna Bailawala also showed their support.

Additionally, community members Prakash Nandihalli, Prakash Kori, Shivayogi Naregal, Ningappa Naregal, Basan na Kalasura, Raju Ajagundi, and Basavaraja Bankapur were present at the launch site. Despite worries over changing em ployment schemes, residents welcomed the new infrastructure injection. The community hopes these newly funded village upgrades will successfully overcome policy hurdles, strea mline local transportation, and lay down a solid foundation for long-term financial growth acro ss the entire Hanagal region.

# VP Radhakrishnan challenges youth to lead technology

**DAVANAGERE**

Vice President C. P. Radhakrishnan called on India's youth and engineering institutions to spearhead the nation's journey toward total technological self- reliance. Speaking at the 75th anniversary launch of the University BDT College of Engineering, he stressed that colleges must cultivate ethical, innovative problem-solvers to secure global knowledge leadership.

Highlighting the transforming impact of national initiatives like Startup India, Digital India, and Semiconductor manufacturing, the Vice President explained that these programs offer historic opportunities for young researchers. He noted that India's ambitious goal of becoming a fully developed country by the year 2047 rests primarily on the shoulders of its engineers and scientists. He highly praised the host college for building state-of-the-art infrastructure, including its AICTE Idea Lab and specialized Drone Technology Laboratory.

Sharing the stage, Governor Thawar Chand Gehlot pointed out that Karnataka remains the undisputed leader in India's technology ecosystem, largely thanks to its excellent educational institutes. He noted that modern advancements in artificial intelligence, green technology, and cyber security present massive opportunities for the state to achieve global dominance.

Additionally, Sri Adichunchanagiri Math head Nirmalanandanath Mahaswamiji proudly observed that Karnataka already produces 45% of the entire nation's smart startups. He warmly challenged the young students to focus heavily on continuous skill regeneration. The diamond jubilee celebration concluded successfully, dra wing several prominent national leaders, including Member of Parliament Yaduveer Krishnadatta Chamaraja Wodeyar and former AICTE President Professor T.G. Sitaram, who gathered to honor the historic institute's engineering legacy.

## Special sports selection camps announced across Karnataka

**GADAG**

The Youth Empowerment and Sports Department is organizing special selection camps across Karnataka this June. This initiative offers a second chance for eligible students aiming for admission into prestigious sports residential schools and hostels for the 2026-27 academic year.

The program targets athletes entering eighth grade, who must be under 14 years old, and first PUC students under 18. Anyone who missed the previous district or divisional trials can join. Additionally, previously selected state-level candidates can participate to improve their official performance scores by noting it on their applications.

These specialized trials will take place simultaneously on June 1 at four major venues. The Belgaum District Sports Complex will host volleyball, cycling, wrestling, and judo. The Mahatma Gandhi Stadium in Tumkur will evaluate athletics, kabaddi, gymnastics, and football. Meanwhile, Bengaluru's Sri Kanteerava Complex will handle basketball, boxing, archery, and fencing, while the Akkithimmanahalli Stadium oversees hockey selections.

## Menstrual hygiene day observed for NREGA workers

**KOPPAL**

The Kallatavaragera Gram Panchayat organized an essential awareness program marking Menstrual Hygiene Day. The special health event took place directly at the D Hosalli Lake silting work site to reach out to local women working under the Mahatma Gandhi NREGA project. Addressing the workers, Zilla Panchayat Sanitation Consultant Basamma Hudeda strongly advised every woman to prioritize personal hygiene during menstruation. She emphasized the benefits of using sanitary pads, clean clothes, urging women to break old social stigmas.

## Chitradurga bids farewell to retiring DDLR Ramanjaneya

**CHITRADURGA**

After years of dedicated service, Chitradurga is bidding a warm farewell to its retiring Deputy Director of Land Records, B. Ramanjaneya. A special celebration in his honor will take place on June 1 at 5:30 PM. The event is set at the KEB Community Hall, located on the NH-48 Service Road.

A distinguished group of top officials will attend to celebrate his impactful career. The guest list includes Department Commissioner Venkataraja, Deputy Commissioner T. Venkatesh, and Additional Director K. Jayaprakash. Joining them to honor their colleague are Additional Deputy Commissioner B.T. Kumaraswamy and Joint Director S. Nisar Ahmed. The ceremony will be led by Eknath V.R.M., the Assistant Director of Chitradurga Land Records.

*Kaveri Handlooms has been appointed to implement a government scheme reimbursing essential expenses for small state textile businesses.*

# Government appoints Kaveri Handlooms for MSME initiative

**CHIKKABALLAPUR**

The state government has appointed the Karnataka State Cooperative Handloom Weavers' Mahamandal as the official implementing agency for a major business support initiative. Operating under the name Kaveri Handlooms, the Bengaluru-based organization will lead efforts to strengthen micro, small, and medium enterprises.

This strategic move is part of the central government's Raising and Accelerating MSME Performance program. Under this scheme, Kaveri Handlooms will completely reimburse small textile businesses for various essential expenses. This includes money spent on product packaging, creative branding, and obtaining vital official trade certifications.

Local textile units can now claim cash back for securing official handloom marks, silk marks, and international quality standards like ISO or BIS certification.

These premium quality seals are crucial for small weavers looking to compete in modern commercial markets, but the upfront testing costs often prove too expensive for low-income artisans.

The Deputy Director of the Department of Handlooms and Textiles issued an official statement urging all eligible local textile entrepreneurs and self-employed weavers to contact the agency immediately to claim their financial benefits.

Business owners who want to apply or learn more about the application process can call the department directly using the newly released helpline numbers: 08156-277031, 9945594959, 8971754927, or 9986392953.

## Tribal languages enrich Kannada, Says Abdul Rasheed

**MADIKERI**

Author Abdul Rasheed highligh ted the profound impact of sma ller tribal languages on the enrichment of Kannada literature. Speaking at the 17th Kodagu District Kannada Literary Conference in Suntikoppa, he rejected the common "Kashmir of Karnataka" label for Kodagu, stating that it undermines the region's distinct cultural identity.

Rasheed emphasized that protecting Kannada in Kodagu directly requires preserving local indigenous dialects like Kodava, Arebhashe, and Jenukuruba. He warned that if these uni que regional streams dry up, Kannada itself will become impoverished. To sustain these endan zgered communities, he proposed employing local resource persons to teach indigenous languages within tribal ashram schools.

The veteran writer called for an educational language formula and a dedicated cultural policy for Kodagu. He urged the government to establish modern digital audio libraries to archive tribal music and to reprint classic works by regional literary icons like Panje Mangesha Raya and Bharathisuthar. Addressing deep social vulnerabilities, Rasheed expressed urgent concern over how poverty, alcoholism, and isolation leave local forest-dwelling tribals prone to silent religious conversions.

Earlier, outgoing conference president Dr. Teethira Rekha Va santh advocated for broad social and religious tolerance to elevate the community.

## Canara Bank offers free self-employment training

**CHIKKABALLAPUR**

Unemployed men and women looking to start their own businesses can now apply for free skill training programs starting June 1 at the Canara Bank Rural Self-Employment Training Institute near Chadalpur. The upcoming June sessions will focus on two lucrative sectors: fast-food preparation (including commercial salt formulation) and jute bag manufacturing. To qualify, applicants must be between 18 and 50 years old, proficie nt in the local langu age, and able to read and write Kannada. The institute provides entirely free food and accom modation for the duration of the camp.

**KHADI BUSINESS BOOST**

# *Khadi Board Initiative Funds Local Startups*

**CHIKKABALLAPUR**

The Karnataka State Khadi and Village Industries Board announced an exciting new self-employment initiative.

Under the Prime Minister's Employment Generation Scheme for 2026-27, unemployed youth can now secure substantial bank loans to launch their own businesses in rural or urban areas.

To spark local industrial growth, the government has set high funding limits. Budding entrepreneurs can secure up to twenty lakh rupees for service-based start-ups. Meanwhile, those looking to establish large manufacturing units can apply for massive financial packages worth up to fifty lakh rupees.

To make this program even more accessible, the government is providing a generous maximum subsidy margin of 35% on the total project cost.

This major financial cushion drastically reduces the initial risk and burden for first-time business owners.

Interested applicants must submit their files digitally through the official online portal at www.kviconline.gov.in/pmegpeportal.

When applying, candidates need to upload a passport-size photograph, educational certificates, an identity card, income and caste certificates, a ration card, a detailed project report, and an official village population certificate issued directly by a Gram Panchayat Development Officer or Tahsildar.

This multi-agency collaboration aims to curb regional unemployment while transforming ambitious local youths into successful job creators.

For further details, applicants can visit the office directly or contact the District Khadi and Village Industries Officer at 08156-272097 or 9480825620.

## QUICK READ

### Gir lion cubs die in suspected infection

**Gandhinagar**
Eight lion cubs in Gujarat's Gir region have died in suspected babesiosis cases, officials said on Friday. The deaths were reported from areas outside the protected Gir sanctuary, mainly in Gir Gadhada taluka and Babarkot area of Amreli district. State Forest and Environment Minister Arjun Modhwadia said no new deaths linked to the suspected infection were reported in the last 48 hours. Samples from the dead cubs have been sent to the Gujarat Biotechnology Research Centre, and reports are expected within three to four days.

### CRPF officer, youth found dead in Kashmir

**Srinagar**
A junior officer of the Central Reserve Police Force died after collapsing inside a camp in Jammu and Kashmir's Shopian district on Friday. Police said the Assistant Sub-Inspector was posted at the Horticulture Camp in Zainapora and was declared dead at a health centre after being taken there unconscious. He belonged to Kathua district. In a separate incident, a 25-year-old mechanic was found hanging at his home in Kulgam district. Police have started investigations in both cases.

### Former BSNL officer gets jail in DA case

**Ranchi**
A special Central Bureau of Investigation court in Ranchi has convicted former Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited officer Ram Vinod Singh in a disproportionate assets case and sentenced him to three years in jail. The court also imposed a fine of Rs 25 lakh. The case was registered in 2007 after the CBI found assets worth around Rs 34 lakh beyond his known income sources. During searches, officials recovered cash and documents related to movable and immovable properties from his premises.

# Cong accuses PM of 'moral cowardice' over Israel stance

## The party accused the PM of ignoring Palestinian suffering while strongly backing Israel internationally.

**NEW DELHI**

The Congress on Friday sharply criticised Prime Minister Narendra Modi over his reported support for Israel during the ongoing conflict in Gaza and other parts of West Asia. Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said Modi had failed to condemn Israeli military actions in Gaza, Lebanon and the occupied West Bank.

Ramesh reacted after Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu reportedly claimed at a conference in the West Bank that Israel was facing criticism across the world except in India. Ramesh said the support came mainly from Modi's political circle and not from the Indian public as a whole.

He alleged that Modi remained silent on the deaths of Palestinians and on Israel's bombing campaigns in different regions. The Congress leader also claimed Modi did not speak against the reported assassination of Iran's top leadership earlier this year.

Ramesh further alleged that Modi warmly engaged with Israel shortly before large-scale military attacks on Iran began. He claimed the Prime Minister's stand was against India's traditional foreign policy position supporting peace and Palestinian rights. According to Ramesh, Modi's approach reflected "moral cowardice" and was unacceptable to millions of Indians who believe India should maintain a balanced international position.

The Congress leader also said India had historically supported peaceful dialogue and a two-state solution in the Middle East. He argued that New Delhi should continue maintaining independent diplomatic relations instead of appearing completely aligned with one side in the conflict.

Ramesh said many Indians were unhappy with the government's silence on humanitarian issues, including displacement, civilian deaths and restrictions on Palestinian rights.

The ruling government has not yet responded publicly to the Congress leader's latest allegations regarding India's position on Israel and the continuing regional conflict today

# Sharmila meets Rahul amid RS buzz

**Congress leader YS Sharmila met Rahul Gandhi amid reports that the party may nominate her to the Rajya Sabha from Karnataka.**

**AMARAVATI**

Andhra Pradesh Congress President Y. S. Sharmila on Friday met senior Congress leader Rahul Gandhi in New Delhi amid growing speculation over her possible nomination to the Rajya Sabha. The meeting has triggered political discussions as the Congress leadership is reportedly considering her name for one of the four Rajya Sabha seats from Karnataka, where elections are scheduled on June 18.

Sharmila avoided giving a direct answer about the reports. When asked if her nomination was discussed, she said the talks mainly focused on Andhra Pradesh politics and strengthening the Congress party in the state. She added that Rahul Gandhi "knows the best" when questioned repeatedly about the Rajya Sabha speculation.

Later, Sharmila shared on X that she met Rahul Gandhi at his residence and discussed several issues related to rebuilding the Congress in Andhra Pradesh. She said Rahul Gandhi also gave suggestions to strengthen the organisation in the state. Congress General Secretary K. C. Venugopal was also reportedly present during the meeting.

Political observers believe that nominating Sharmila to the Rajya Sabha could help Congress regain strength in Andhra Pradesh, where the party has struggled for more than a decade.

# Delhi HC refers CJP's X handle to review panel

**NEW DELHI**

The Delhi High Court on Friday directed a review committee under the IT Rules to examine the blocking of satirical group Cockroach Janta Party's X account and take a decision before July 7, while refusing to order immediate restoration of the handle.

Hearing the plea, Justice Purushaindra Kumar Kaurav allowed CJP founder Abhijeet Dipke to appear virtually before the committee and said the panel is empowered to order unblocking if it finds the action unjustified. The court also issued notices to the Centre and X (formerly Twitter) seeking their responses.

The petition challenges the blocking of the digital satirical outfit Cockroach Janta Party (CJP), which claims its content is based on political satire and public commentary. Senior advocate Akhil Sibal, appearing for the petitioner, argued that only specific objectionable posts should be removed instead of blocking the entire account.

# BJP backs Shah's stand on illegal infiltration

**NEW DELHI**

Bharatiya Janata Party leaders on Friday welcomed Union Home Minister Amit Shah's statement that people who leave voluntarily will not face legal action from the West Bengal government, while stressing that illegal infiltration is harming India's economy and security.

At a public event in Gandhinagar, Amit Shah said the BJP government in West Bengal had taken quick steps on border security, including setting up detention centres and transferring land for fencing work along the border.

BJP leaders strongly supported his remarks. Party MP Radhamohan Singh said illegal infiltration is damaging the country's economy and insisted that such individuals should leave India. Bihar minister Ram Kripal Yadav said the issue is being handled seriously under Shah's leadership and alleged that the previous Trinamool Congress government had allowed infiltrators to settle and access public resources.

BJP spokesperson Pratul Shah Deo said the party is implementing what it promises, pointing out that land was handed over to the Border Security Force soon after the party came to power in West Bengal for fencing work. He also said voluntary exit is a better option for illegal migrants, otherwise they may face legal action including fines and imprisonment.

Party MP Lahar Singh Siroya also raised concerns about infiltration in Karnataka, alleging that some migrants were given Aadhaar cards and added to voter lists during earlier governments.

Shah also stated that the BJP currently governs around 80 per cent of India's geographical area and called recent political gains in West Bengal a major achievement for the party. BJP leaders reiterated that stronger border control and strict action against infiltration are necessary to protect national resources and security across the country today.

*Delhi to provide free travel in DTC buses for NEET-UG re-test candidates on June 21*

# 'Majority of NEET reform recommendations already implemented'

**NEW DELHI**

Former K. Radhakrishnan informed the Supreme Court that most recommendations made after the NEET-UG 2024 controversy have either been implemented or are under execution. In an affidavit filed before the apex court, he said the reforms were aimed at ensuring transparent and fair examinations by the National Testing Agency. The expert committee, formed by the Union Education Ministry in June 2024, consulted state governments, police officials, technology experts, students and teachers before preparing its report. According to the affidavit, the committee received more than 37,000 responses through the MyGov portal and submitted 101 recommendations in October 2024. A High-Powered Steering Committee was later formed to monitor implementation of the reforms. Radhakrishnan said states are now actively involved in conducting NEET examinations through state and district coordination committees. He also said over 99.5 per cent of NEET-UG 2026 examination centres were government institutions. Aadhaar-based biometric authentication, CCTV surveillance, mobile jammers and multi-layer frisking have also been introduced to prevent malpractice. The affidavit added that artificial intelligence tools are being used to detect suspicious examination patterns and improve grievance redressal systems. Long-term reforms, including computer-based testing and stronger data security systems, are being introduced gradually under the committee's supervision.The affidavit was submitted after the Supreme Court asked Radhakrishnan to provide an update on implementation progress following petitions demanding major reforms in NEET examinations after the 2026 paper leak controversy states.

Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Friday announced free travel in all DTC buses for candidates appearing in the NEET (UG) 2026 re-test scheduled for June 21. The facility will be available on presentation of a valid admit card, she said in a post on X. Gupta added that no student should face inconvenience on such an important day and extended her best wishes, hoping their hard work brings success. The re-test was scheduled after the National Testing Agency cancelled the May 3 NEET exam amid alleged paper leak, which is under CBI investigation.

# KERALA GOVT ANNOUNCES MENSTRUAL LEAVE FOR SCHOOLGIRLS

**THIRUVANANTHAPURAM**

The new Congress-led UDF government in Kerala has announced up to three days of monthly menstrual leave for schoolgirls as part of a major women and child welfare policy.

The proposal was presented in the Governor's maiden policy address in the Assembly by Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar during the opening session of the government led by Chief Minister V. D. Satheesan.

The policy, described under the theme "menstrual dignity," aims to make schools and public spaces more sensitive

to the needs of girls and women.

Under the plan, school students will be allowed up to three days of leave every month during menstruation.

To ensure studies are not affected, the government also proposed special weekend classes to help students catch up with lessons.The announcement has become one of the most talked-about decisions of the new government's first legislative session. The policy also states that Kerala will be developed into the most women-friendly state in the country.

The government promised equal pay measures for women, better welfare support for those working in the unorganised sector, and six months of maternity leave for women workers outside formal employment. It also announced plans for more public toilets and free access to sanitary products, footwear and other basic needs for women.

# AIADMK warns TVK over cadre poaching

**MADURAI**

All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) leader R. B. Udhayakumar on Friday warned Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) leader Aadhav Arjuna of serious political consequences if attempts to attract AIADMK workers continue.

Udhayakumar rejected Arjuna's claim that nearly 90 per cent of AIADMK cadres were ready to join TVK.

He said such statements were false and warned that continued "poaching" of party workers would lead to a strong political backlash. He said AIADMK workers remain loyal at the grassroots level and cannot be influenced by money or promises.

He also criticised Arjuna, calling him a recent entrant in politics without strong ideological roots. Udhayakumar alleged that TVK is trying to lure opposition party workers using financial influence and other incentives.

He said such actions amount to "body-snatching" of party cadres and would not be tolerated.

The AIADMK leader further argued that the party continues to enjoy strong public support despite election results. He said the party remains committed to public service under the leadership of Edappadi K. Palaniswami and will not be weakened by attempts to divide its cadre base.

Udhayakumar also questioned TVK's political strength, saying it has not yet proven its mandate to claim large-scale support.

He accused the party of creating false narratives about AIADMK weakening while exaggerating its own influence.

Issuing a strong warning, he said AIADMK's cadre base of two crore workers would respond politically and legally if such activities continue.

He added that party workers across Tamil Nadu remain united and prepared to defend the organisation.

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Whereas, the undersigned being the authorised officer of **Manappuram Home Finance Ltd ("MAHOFIN")** under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest *[Act], 2002 (54 of 2002) and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with rule 9 of the security interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a **Demand Notice** calling upon the borrowers and co-borrowers to repay the amount mentioned in the notice and Interest thereon within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken **Symbolic** possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under section 13(4) of the said *[Act] read with rule 9 of the said rules. The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of the Manappuram Home Finance Ltd as mentioned below for each of the respective properties:

| Sr. No. | Name of Borrower and Co-borrower / Loan account number/ Branch | Description Of Secured Asset In Respect Of Which Interest Has Been Created | Date of Demand Notice sent & Outstanding Amount | Date of Possession |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Salma Banu, Mohamed Ateeq, Abdul Salam, **/MHL00510016755/** Shimoga | All That The Piece or Parcel of Site Along With Structure Standing There on Being Bearing Site/ Property No. 17, E-Property No. 152400104200900058, Measuring East-West 12.192 Meter X North-South 18.288 Meter, Total 222.97 Sq. Meter, Including 111.48 Sq. Meter House, Situated At Guddadaneralakere Village, Kommaranahalli Village Panchayath, Bhadravthi Taluk, Shivamogga District, Karnataka, Pin: 577301. Easr-Road, West-Site No. 28, South-Site No. 18, North-Site No., Road | 16-02-2026 & Rs.381067/- | 27-05-2026 |
| 2 | Murugesha R, Ravi MS, Shanthmma R, **/NLAP00933032777/** Tumkur | All That Piece And Parcel of The Residential Building Bearing Grama Panchayath Khatha No.370/106 108 And E-Khatha No.151900201600600049 Measuring East To West: 10.1 Mtrs And North To South: 20 Mtrs Is Situated At Muthanuru Village, Budhikote Hobli, Bangarapet Taluk, Kolara District, Karnataka, Pin: 563129. Easr-Vacant Site Belongs To Seethappa., West-Road.,South-HouseBelongsToVenkateshappa.,North-Property Belongs To Venkateshappa And Munishamappa. | 16-02-2026 & Rs.817165/- | 27-05-2026 |
| 3 | Puttaswamy D, Manjula G, Lingappa D, **/CO90COLONS 000005008117/** Mysore | All That Piece And Parcel of The Property Bearing Belakavadi Gramapanchayathi Khatha No. 1570/87/A And As Per Form No. 9 And 11 A Unique No. 152100303500101663 Situated At Belakavadi, Malavalli Taluk, Mandya, Karnataka, Pin: 571417 Measuring East To West 6.096 Meters And North To South: 16.76 Meters. Easr-House of Shivamma, West-House of Mallamma, South-House of Kalluru Siddaiah, North-Road | 18-02-2026 & Rs.260911/- | 27-05-2026 |

**Date: 30th May 2026 | Place: KARNATAKA** **Sd/- Authorised Officer Manappuram Home Finance Ltd**

**TOBACCO CONTROL**

# *Govt launches tobacco-free schools monitoring app*

**NEW DELHI**

On the occasion of World No Tobacco Day 2026, the Union Health Ministry launched the pilot version of the Tobacco-Free Educational Institutions (ToFEI) application to strengthen tobacco-free rules in schools and colleges across India.

The application was launched by Union Health Secretary Punya Salila Srivastava during a national programme held at Kartavya Bhawan under the National Tobacco Control Programme.

The ToFEI application is a digital platform developed to help educational institutions monitor and report compliance

with tobacco-free guidelines.

It will support self-assessment by schools and colleges, improve monitoring of tobacco control measures, ensure installation of warning signboards and help enforce the ban on tobacco sales within 100 yards of educational institutions.

The platform will also encourage awareness programmes for students and teachers while improving enforcement of tobacco-free campus measures.

Officials said the application would help states, Union Territories and institutions follow a standard system for reporting and monitoring compliance, thereby creating healthier environments for children and adolescents.

The pilot project will begin in Rajasthan, Meghalaya and Maharashtra.

The government said the pilot phase will help examine operational challenges and improve reporting systems before expanding the platform nationwide.

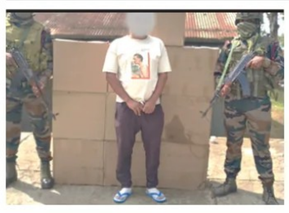
During the event, the ministry also released a Standard Operating Procedure for collection of tobacco product samples.

The SOP aims to improve surveillance, testing and quality checks of tobacco products through proper collection, storage and transportation methods.

Addressing the programme, Punya Salila Srivastava said this year's World No Tobacco Day theme, "Unmasking the Appeal - Countering Nicotine and Tobacco Addiction", highlights the growing concern over marketing strategies targeting youth.

She said attractive packaging, flavours, surrogate advertisements and social media promotions often create misleading impressions about tobacco and nicotine products among young people across the country today.

## QUICK READ



### Assam Rifles busts major drug smuggling racket

**Aizawl**
Assam Rifles, along with the Excise and Narcotics Department, seized methamphetamine tablets and foreign cigarettes worth Rs 35.71 crore in three operations across Mizoram. Officials said four drug peddlers were arrested. In Lawngtlai district, security forces recovered one lakh meth tablets weighing 9.807 kg and valued at over Rs 30 crore. Acting on intelligence inputs, the suspects were tracked and intercepted near an IOCL petrol pump. The drugs were hidden inside server hardware equipment. The accused and seized items were handed over for further investigation.

### Neighbour blames delay in Delhi fire response

**New Delhi**
A neighbour of former IAS officer and first CCI chairman Dhanendra Kumar alleged that the fire brigade reached nearly an hour late after a fire broke out at Kumar's Hauz Khas residence in South Delhi. Kumar reportedly died due to smoke inhalation following a suspected air-conditioner blast.
Neighbour Ramesh claimed the delay worsened the tragedy and said fire officials could not locate the address quickly.
Kumar's son, daughter and domestic staff were inside the house, while his wheelchair-bound wife was rescued safely by residents.

### Acid spill kills woman, injures 2 children

**Bhopal**
A tragic accident in Mohanpura village of Madhya Pradesh's Barwani district claimed the life of 24-year-old Pinky and seriously injured her two children after acid spilled on them while they were asleep. Police said a five-litre acid can, stored for cleaning drip irrigation lines, fell from a rack around 4 a.m., possibly due to rats moving inside the house. The injured were rushed to hospital, but Pinky died on the way. The children remain under treatment, and police have started an investigation into the incident.

# Cong prez Kharge praises Siddaramaiah's leadership

Congress leaders expressed confidence that Karnataka's leadership transition will ensure stability and continuation of welfare programmes.

**NEW DELHI**

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Friday met outgoing Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah in New Delhi and praised his long public service. Kharge said Siddaramaiah always supported equality, harmony and welfare programmes for poor and marginalised communities.

He described Siddaramaiah as a compassionate leader who rose from humble beginnings and served Karnataka with dedication during his two terms as chief minister.

Sharing details on social media, Kharge thanked Siddaramaiah for his contribution to the Congress party and the state. Siddaramaiah also posted about the meeting and said senior leaders KJ George, Priyank Kharge and MLC Yathindra Siddaramaiah attended the discussions.

The Karnataka leader later met Congress MP Rahul Gandhi and party general secretary KC Venugopal. According to party sources, the discussions included the expected Karnataka cabinet reshuffle, Rajya Sabha elections and other organisational matters.

Amid continuing political speculation, Congress MLA Ashok Pattan claimed Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar could be elected leader of the Congress Legislative Party during Saturday's meeting. He also said many new faces were likely to be included in the next cabinet.

Senior Congress leader Veerappa Moily described Karnataka's leadership change as a planned and smooth transition. He said the Congress government would remain stable and continue welfare programmes under the new leadership. Satish Jarkiholi denied reports linking him to the Karnataka Congress president's post. Party leaders said the final decision on leadership and cabinet expansion would be taken after discussions with the Congress high command in Delhi.

**Jairam Ramesh hails Siddu**

Congress leader Jairam Ramesh praised outgoing Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, calling him one of the state's most influential leaders. He highlighted Siddaramaiah's four-decade political career, 17 state Budgets and commitment to social justice, secularism and public welfare. Ramesh also appreciated his dignified handling of the leadership transition. Amid speculation over Karnataka's next chief minister, Congress leaders held meetings in Delhi regarding cabinet changes and organisational matters. Senior leader Veerappa Moily described the transition as smooth and planned earlier, while Satish Jarkiholi dismissed rumours about becoming Karnataka Congress president. Leaders expressed confidence in stable governance and continuation of welfare programmes.

# BJP leaders honour Khanduri, review poll preparations

**DEHRADUN**

**Senior BJP leaders paid tribute to BC Khanduri and discussed booth strengthening, outreach and election planning ahead of Uttarakhand's 2027 Assembly polls**

Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami, BJP National President Nitin Nabin and senior party leaders paid tribute to former Chief Minister BC Khanduri at his residence in Dehradun on Friday.

National General Secretary BL Santhosh and other leaders also visited the family and offered condolences.

Speaking after the visit, Dhami praised Khanduri's disciplined leadership and commitment to public service. He said the former chief minister always followed the party's "Nation First" ideology and inspired party workers through honesty and dedication.Ritu Bhushan Khanduri, Speaker of the Uttarakhand Assembly and daughter of the late leader, thanked the BJP leadership for visiting the family. She said the presence of senior leaders reflected their affection and respect for her father.Later, Nitin Nabin and Dhami attended meetings with BJP Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha members from Uttarakhand at a hotel in Dehradun. The discussions mainly focused on preparations for the 2027 Uttarakhand Assembly elections.

BJP state president Mahendra Bhatt said party leaders were asked to increase rural outreach so that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's development work reaches every village. He said the party would prepare a list of 100 intellectuals from each Assembly constituency and strengthen communication with them.

Bhatt added that special attention would be given to weak booths and constituencies where BJP either lost or secured narrow victories. Full-time workers.

*The ex-CM accused the Kerala government of ignoring welfare achievements and avoiding criticism of Centre policies*

# Pinarayi lambasts Kerala govt policies

**THIRUVANANTHAPURAM**

Leader of Opposition Pinarayi Vijayan on Friday criticised the UDF government's policy address presented in the Kerala Assembly, saying it lacked clarity on major economic and development issues facing the state.

Vijayan said the address ignored several welfare schemes and development projects started by the previous Left Democratic Front government. He claimed there was no mention of Kerala Infrastructure Investment Fund Board, Kudumbasree and other missions that transformed the state and improved people's lives.

The former chief minister also said the policy speech failed to discuss the Left government's long-term development plan for Kerala till 2035 and lacked a clear roadmap for the UDF's promise of creating a "Puthuyugam" or new-age Kerala.

Vijayan accused the government of creating a false impression about Kerala's financial condition. He claimed the state treasury currently holds Rs 5,429 crore, citing Reserve Bank of India figures, and said Kerala's debt had reduced by more than five percent during the last five years.He further alleged that the UDF government was avoiding responsibility for implementing promises made during the Assembly elections. According to him, the policy address did not explain how the government would protect people from the effects of the Centre's economic policies.

Vijayan also criticised the speech for remaining silent on rural employment schemes, poverty eradication efforts and issues related to offshore deep-sea mining and the Blue Economy project announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

He warned that the state's development and welfare measures could weaken under the present administration. The policy address of the V D Satheesan government was read out by Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar during the first session of the 16th Kerala Legislative Assembly on Friday.

# West Asia crisis reduces global air passenger demand

**NEW DELHI**

Global air passenger demand fell by 3.4 per cent in April 2026 due to tensions and conflict in West Asia, according to the International Air Transport Association (IATA).

The aviation body said the sharp decline in Middle East travel significantly affected overall global passenger traffic.

IATA stated that total demand, measured in revenue passenger kilometres, declined 3.4 per cent compared to April 2025.

However, excluding the Middle East region, global demand increased by 1.2 per cent. International passenger demand dropped by 5.3 per cent, while domestic demand remained largely unchanged during the period.

IATA Director General Willie Walsh said the war in West Asia caused a 46.6 per cent fall in passenger demand for Middle Eastern airlines.

He also said the aviation industry remains highly unstable as jet fuel prices more than doubled during April, increasing operational costs and airfares worldwide.

According to the report, airlines are reducing flight schedules in the coming months because of rising fuel costs and weaker travel demand.

The association noted that Middle Eastern carriers recorded a 48.1 per cent fall in passenger demand and a major decline in load factors.

Asia-Pacific airlines reported a 3 per cent increase in passenger demand, while European carriers recorded a 0.9 per cent rise.

# 2 rly engineers die in Kota underpass collapse

**KOTA**

Two railway engineers died after soil collapsed during underpass construction work near Dara ki Naal on National Highway 52 in Rajasthan's Kota district, officials said on Friday.

The accident happened late Thursday night while railway officials were supervising construction work beneath railway tracks. Senior Section Engineer Sanjay Kumar Jha and Junior Engineer Prabhat Singh were trapped under debris after the soil suddenly caved in during a box-pushing operation.

Senior Divisional Commercial Manager Saurabh Jain called the incident tragic and confirmed that an investigation has been ordered. He said the engineers were inspecting the work site around 8 pm when the collapse occurred unexpectedly.According to officials, both injured officers were immediately rushed for medical treatment, but doctors declared them dead on arrival. Their bodies were later shifted for post-mortem examination.

Jain said the soil along the sides collapsed suddenly during the operation and added that there was little time for preventive action. Following the incident, railway authorities imposed a speed restriction of 10 kilometres per hour on trains passing through the affected section. Trains have also been instructed to stop and move cautiously until further notice.

Meanwhile, family members of deceased engineer Prabhat Singh alleged negligence by senior officials.

# Shah inaugurates border outpost in Bhuj

**BHUJ**

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday inaugurated Border Outpost G-7 along the Indo-Pak International Border in Gujarat's Bhuj district and said the government had strengthened security arrangements in the sensitive Harami Nala region.

Shah interacted with Border Security Force personnel and planted a neem sapling during the visit. Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel and Deputy Chief Minister Harsh Sanghvi were also present at the programme.

Addressing BSF personnel and officials, Shah said the G-7 centre was built at a cost of nearly Rs 175 crore. He said the project was part of broader efforts to improve border infrastructure and strengthen national security.

The Union Home Minister stated that the Harami Nala region earlier appeared vulnerable from a security perspective.

# AC malfunction suspected behind retired IAS officer's fatal fire

**NEW DELHI**

A suspected malfunction in an air-conditioner unit caused a fire at the Hauz Khas residence of retired IAS officer Dhanendra Kumar, leading to his death, police said on Friday.

South Delhi Deputy Commissioner of Police Anant Mittal said the fire was reported to Hauz Khas Police Station at around 11.18 pm on May 27. Police teams immediately rushed to the spot after receiving information about the blaze at the residence.

By the time officers arrived, two injured persons had already been taken to hospital in a PCR vehicle. Police personnel and local residents tried to control the fire using nearby water sources before fire brigade teams reached the location and extinguished the flames.Police identified the deceased as Dhanendra Kumar, an IAS officer from the 1968 batch who served in several senior positions in the Centre and Haryana governments.According to the preliminary investigation, an air-conditioner installed in Kumar's room malfunctioned, causing smoke and fire inside the house. Police suspect Kumar collapsed because of suffocation caused by heavy smoke. Family members and domestic staff later brought him out of the room and shifted him to hospital, where he later died during treatment.

Mittal said Kumar's son, who lives abroad, was present in the house for a family function along with other relatives.

### TASMAC shops reopen after 3-day stir Krishnagiri

**KRISHNAGIRI**

All 111 TASMAC liquor shops in Krishnagiri district reopened on Friday after remaining closed for three days due to a protest by TASMAC employees demanding fulfilment of their long-pending demands.

The shutdown caused inconvenience to liquor consumers, many of whom travelled to nearby border areas in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka to purchase alcohol. Some also searched for liquor at military canteens and private bars during the protest period.

The agitation was organised by the Joint Action Committee of TASMAC Employees' Unions in front.

**HOOCH CRACKDOWN**

# *Fadnavis orders tough action after hooch tragedy*

**MUMBAI**

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Friday ordered strict action against those responsible for the deaths caused by illegal liquor in Pune and Pimpri Chinchwad.

At least 13 people died after consuming toxic hooch, while several others remain hospitalised in critical condition.

Fadnavis said the incident would be treated as murder and not merely negligence. He instructed police officials to ensure that no accused person escapes punishment and warned that there would be absolutely no leniency against the culprits.

The Chief Minister said he had spoken directly with the police commissioners of Pune and Pimpri Chinchwad.

According to him, investigators identified the exact place where dangerous methanol-like chemicals were mixed with illicit liquor before distribution.

Police have arrested eight suspects so far, while teams are searching for others linked to the illegal network. Multi-agency squads involving police, State Excise officials and forensic experts have launched raids across affected areas to dismantle the racket completely.

Pune Police Commissioner Amitesh Kumar also visited localities such as Hadapsar to personally supervise the investigation and crackdown

operations.

Officials said medical treatment is being provided on priority to victims admitted to hospitals.

Police sources stated that the death toll may increase as more suspected cases emerge from nearby areas.

Investigators suspect nearly 215 litres of industrial methanol were mixed into country liquor.

The main suspect under investigation is alleged bootlegger Yogesh Wankhede, who reportedly supplied the deadly liquor batches.

Authorities are examining medical reports and forensic evidence to build a strong legal case against those involved in manufacturing and distributing the toxic alcohol.

Local residents and victims' families demanded stronger action to prevent similar tragedies in future and ensure strict monitoring of illegal liquor activities across the region completely.

Government of Karnataka - Zilla Panchayat
Office of The Executive Engineer,
**Panchayat Raj Engineering Division, Chikkamagaluru**
Ph No.: 08262-220936 e-mail: zpedckm@rediffmail.com
Tender Notice No.:02/2026-27/2ndCall/506 D: 27.05.2026

**Tender Notice 2nd call**

Executive Engineer, Panchayat Raj Engineering Division, Chikkamagaluru invites Tenders through K.P.P.P. related to M.G.N.R.E.G.A. works of Chikkamagaluru, Mudigere and N.R. Pura Taluks in Chikkamagaluru District. Max. Approx. Amount put to Tender is Rs. 8259837.00 and Min. Approx. Amount is Rs. 783814.00. Details of capability to undertake or of having implemented the works should be attached as per Standard Tender Document KG – I & II. For the said works the documents downloaded from K.P.P.P. can be filled and uploaded from 27.05.2026 to 04.06.2026 up to 5.30 PM. If possible the Financial Bid will be opened on 06.06.2026 at 5.05 PM. If this day is declared as holiday then the next day will be considered. Notice can be read on www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in Further details can be obtained by contacting the case worker during office hours.

**Sd/- Executive Engineer,**
**Panchayat Raj Engineering Division, Chikkamagaluru.**
DIPR/CKM/KSMCA/26-27/39/298

## QUICK READ

### Chagai nuke test celebrations opposed

**Quetta**

A Baloch student organisation criticised Pakistan for celebrating the 28th anniversary of the Chagai nuclear tests conducted in Balochistan on May 28, 1998. The Baloch Student Council said the tests caused displacement, environmental damage and militarisation in the region. Activists also held peaceful protests and awareness campaigns worldwide. The group alleged that the tests were carried out without the consent of local people and claimed Balochistan continues to face exploitation, suppression and loss of identity under policies imposed in the name of national interest.

### Pak cops arrest Afghan journalist near Islamabad

**Kabul**

Pakistani police arrested Afghan journalist Seyed Qasim Hashemi on the Abbottabad-Islamabad highway on Thursday, according to local media reports. Authorities have not disclosed the reason for his arrest or revealed his current location. Efforts by colleagues and friends to gather information about him have reportedly failed. The arrest comes amid Pakistan's ongoing crackdown on Afghan refugees and immigrants. Earlier this month, another Afghan journalist, Parwiz Aminzada, was also arrested in Islamabad. Human rights groups have raised concerns over the treatment of Afghan journalists and asylum seekers in Pakistan.

### Uyghur group urges Canada to challenge China

**Ottawa**

A Uyghur advocacy group in Canada urged the government to raise concerns over China's human rights record during Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi's visit to Canada.
The Uyghur Rights Advocacy Project asked Prime Minister Mark Carney and Foreign Minister Anita Anand to discuss the detention, surveillance and forced labour of Uyghurs in Xinjiang.

# Trump yet to approve US-Iran ceasefire deal

The US-Iran reportedly finalised a draft ceasefire extension agreement amid ongoing regional tensions and disputes.

**WASHINGTON**

A memorandum of understanding for a proposed 60-day ceasefire extension between the United States and Iran has reportedly been finalised, but approval from US President Donald Trump is still pending.

Reuters, citing Axios, reported that the draft agreement had been completed after several rounds of negotiations. However, the White House declined to comment on the report. Earlier, Trump had denied reports claiming that a final agreement with Iran had already been reached.

The development came shortly after reports of fresh exchanges of fire between American and Iranian military forces. Over recent days, Trump administration officials have repeatedly stated that talks with Iran were progressing and that a deal was close, though important differences still remain unresolved.

One major issue involves the release of frozen Iranian funds and the transfer of Iran's enriched uranium. Another point of disagreement concerns Iran's proposal to charge toll fees for ships passing through the Strait of Hormuz, one of the world's most important shipping routes for oil and gas trade.

US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said Washington would not accept any attempt to impose tolls on vessels using the Strait.

He repeated Trump's earlier position that the waterway must remain open for free international navigation if any agreement is to move forward.

At the same time, Trump is reportedly facing pressure from members of his own Republican Party.

Some lawmakers have warned against signing any deal that does not immediately and directly address Iran's nuclear programme.

Despite progress in negotiations, uncertainty continues over whether the proposed ceasefire extension will receive final approval from both sides.

# Druze volunteers struggle amidst Sweida violence

**GALILEE**

**A Druze emergency centre in Israel says attacks, shortages and fear continue in Syria's Sweida province despite reports of a ceasefire.**

A Druze-run emergency centre in northern Israel has said the crisis in Syria's Sweida province is continuing despite reports of a ceasefire in the region. The volunteer group was formed after the July 2025 violence in Sweida that reportedly killed thousands of people and forced many families to flee their homes.

The centre, based in the Galilee region, keeps contact with Druze communities in southern Syria and sends humanitarian aid, including food, blankets and medicines. Around 600 volunteers are involved in collecting supplies and sharing updates about conditions in Sweida.

Retired Lt.-Col. Akram Mansour, spokesperson for the centre, said attacks and pressure on Druze villages have not stopped. He said people in Sweida continue to face fear, shortages of water and food, and repeated violence.

Mansour said the world does not fully understand the seriousness of the situation. He called on international organisations and governments to send independent teams to Sweida to check conditions directly instead of depending only on official reports.

The July 2025 clashes involved Druze militias, Bedouin tribal fighters and Syrian government forces. Human rights groups and investigators linked to the United Nations reported allegations of killings, looting and abductions during the violence. Some reports estimated that more than 1,700 people were killed and nearly 200,000 displaced.

Mansour also appealed to world leaders, including US President Donald Trump, to examine the situation closely. He said the conflict should not be seen as a religious issue but as violence carried out by armed groups.

According to the volunteer centre, most of the aid work is funded by the Druze community in Israel. Mansour said volunteers in Julis and nearby areas work day and night to organise donations and transport supplies to families in southern Syria. He urged foreign governments to investigate the crisis independently and support civilians there.

## India-Seychelles deepen maritime security co-op

**SINGAPORE**

India and Seychelles discussed ways to strengthen defence ties and improve maritime security cooperation during meetings held on the sidelines of the Shangri-La Dialogue 2026 in Singapore on Friday.

India's Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh met Seychelles Armed Forces Chief of Defence Forces Major General Micheal Rosette to review bilateral defence cooperation and regional security issues in the Indian Ocean region.

According to India's Ministry of Defence, both countries explored new opportunities to deepen defence collaboration and work together for peace, security and stability in the strategically important Indian Ocean region. The ministry said the interaction also reaffirmed India's commitment to supporting trusted regional partners.

During the Shangri-La Dialogue, Singh also held separate discussions with NATO Military Committee Chair Admiral Giuseppe Cavo Dragone on global and regional security challenges. India highlighted its continued commitment to strategic engagement with NATO during the meeting.Singh further met Admiral Samuel J Paparo, Commander of the United States Indo-Pacific Command, where both sides reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening defence and security cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region.

## Indian oil tanker safely crosses Strait

**NEW YORK**

An oil tanker carrying petroleum for India has safely crossed the Strait of Hormuz and is heading towards Visakhapatnam. The vessel, named Nissos Keros, is expected to arrive in India on June 3.

The tanker, sailing under the Marshall Islands flag, left Shajrah on May 21. On Friday morning, it was reported in the northern Arabian Sea near India's western coast. The ship is owned by Arethusa Shipping Corporation and operated by Kyklades Maritime Corporation. Maritime records show the vessel is 333 metres long and can carry more than 318,000 tonnes of oil.The Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps Navy allowed 23 commercial vessels, including oil tankers and container ships, to pass through the Strait during the previous 24 hours. Iranian authorities said the ships crossed after formal coordination with the IRGC Navy.The Strait of Hormuz remains a major global concern because around 20 per cent of the world's oil and gas passes through it. Tensions increased after Iran announced plans to regulate traffic through a new body called the Persian Gulf Strait Authority. Tehran has also suggested that ships may need to pay fees for crossing the waterway.

The United Nations has stated that charging fees for passage through international waters is illegal. The United States has asked Iran to ensure free movement through the Strait. US President Donald Trump recently said the Strait must remain open to all countries.

The International Maritime Organisation's Secretary-General Arsenio Dominguez said nearly 1,500 ships are currently stranded in the Persian Gulf because of the ongoing tensions and uncertainty surrounding maritime security in the region.

## ETGE flays Pak over support for China's Xinjiang policies

The East Turkistan Government-in-Exile (ETGE) has criticised Pakistan and China over a joint statement issued on May 26, 2026, accusing Islamabad of supporting Beijing's policies in Xinjiang, which the group calls East Turkistan.

In a statement shared on X, the ETGE condemned China for what it described as genocide and colonial occupation in the region. The organisation also accused Pakistan of backing China's position for political and financial reasons.

The ETGE alleged that China has carried out mass detention, forced labour, forced sterilisation of Muslim women, destruction of mosques, and restrictions on Islamic practices in Xinjiang.

It further claimed that Uyghur Muslims and other Turkic communities have faced cultural repression and separation of families.

The group criticised Pakistan for repeatedly supporting China in bilateral statements and said this was not the first time Islamabad had defended Beijing's policies on the issue.

The ETGE also rejected references to the East Turkistan Islamic Movement, or ETIM, in the joint statement. According to the organisation, China used the term after the September 11 attacks to link the East Turkistan independence movement with terrorism.

Quoting ETGE Foreign Minister Salih Hudayar, the statement said Pakistan's support for China contradicted its claims of defending oppressed Muslims.

The ETGE urged Pakistan to withdraw support for China's Xinjiang policies and end related security cooperation.

*Former Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina alleged political targeting after deaths of senior Awami League leaders*

# Hasina seeks probe into death of Awami League leaders

**DHAKA**

Bangladesh's former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina expressed concern over the deaths of several Awami League leaders and activists, accusing the current Bangladesh Nationalist Party government of continuing political violence that began during the interim administration led by Muhammad Yunus. She said the recent incidents showed a serious failure to protect democratic values and uphold the rule of law in the country.

Hasina's statement came after the death of former Awami League lawmaker and freedom fighter Md Dabirul Islam, aged 78, at a hospital in Dhaka on Thursday. He had been released on bail in February because of poor health after spending months in custody in an extortion case filed in October 2024.

In a statement shared on the Awami League's social media platform, Hasina claimed Islam faced severe physical and mental suffering while in detention.

She also questioned why his son, former MP Mazharul Islam Sujan, remains jailed despite being linked to the same case.

Hasina alleged that Islam's death was not natural and called it a planned killing. She further referred to the earlier death of former minister and Awami League leader Ramesh Chandra Sen, who reportedly died after becoming ill in jail in February.

She demanded an independent investigation into both deaths, saying the loss of two respected political leaders from the same district raised serious concerns and should not be ignored by authorities or international observers.

She also criticised the court system, saying different rulings were given to two accused people connected to the same case.

According to Hasina, such actions have created fear among opposition supporters and raised doubts about judicial fairness in Bangladesh.

She urged authorities to ensure transparent investigations and protect political rights across the country fairly.

## Rubio-Dar meet focuses on Iran deal

**WASHINGTON DC**

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio is scheduled to meet Pakistan's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar in Washington on Friday amid ongoing discussions related to the US-Iran deal.

According to the US State Department schedule, the meeting will take place at the Department of State and focus on bilateral ties, regional developments and diplomatic efforts linked to West Asia. Pakistan is currently playing a mediating role in the ongoing negotiations between the United States and Iran.

Pakistan's Foreign Ministry said Dar travelled to Washington after completing meetings at the United Nations Security Council in New York. The ministry stated that discussions would include cooperation in important sectors and Pakistan's efforts.

**POLITICS OVER WATER**

# *Sindh govt draws criticism over Karachi water crisis*

**KARACHI**

Hafiz Naeem ur Rehman has criticised the Pakistan Peoples Party government over Karachi's worsening water shortage, accusing authorities of failing to solve the crisis despite ruling Sindh province for nearly 18 years.

Speaking to journalists during Eid celebrations, the Jamaat-e-Islami leader said Karachi residents continued observing religious traditions despite facing serious civic problems. He stated that Jamaat-e-Islami had arranged collective sacrifice activities at more than 150 places across the city as part of its community service efforts.

Hafiz Naeem said thousands of families were struggling to access water during the Eid holidays. He questioned why the city's water shortage remained unresolved after years of uninterrupted rule by the provincial government. He also criticised the Sindh Solid Waste Management Board, alleging that despite receiving a budget of Rs43 billion, it failed to ensure proper cleanliness and disposal of animal waste during Eid.

The Jamaat-e-Islami chief accused provincial authorities of poor management and misuse of public funds. He also challenged statements made by Karachi Mayor Murtaza Wahab, who reportedly denied claims of a major water shortage in the city.

Reports said nearly 70 per cent of Karachi has faced severe disruption in water supply.

Residents in several areas have reportedly been forced to buy expensive water tankers because of the shortage and rising temperatures.

Neighbourhoods including Gulistan-e-Jauhar, Gulshan-e-Iqbal, Azizabad, Liaquatabad, North Nazimabad, Nazimabad and North Karachi have experienced serious water shortages for more than two weeks, causing difficulties for thousands of residents across Pakistan's largest city.

**CHANGE OF NAME**

I, ANKIT MEGOTIA S/o AMIT KUMAR MEGOTIA, R/o 277, 2nd Cross, 2nd Main Road, Annapoorneshwari Nagar, Bangalore North, Bengaluru, Karnataka-560091, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as ANKIIT MEGOTIA.

**CHANGE OF NAME**

I, ARPIT MEGOTIA S/o AMIT KUMAR MEGOTIA, R/o 277, 2nd Cross, 2nd Main Road, RHCS Layout, Annapoorneshwari Nagar, Bangalore North, Viswaneedam, Bengaluru, Karnataka-560091, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as ARPIIT MEGOTIA.

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

The GPA dated 15-Feb-2014 executed by Mrs. K. R. Vijayashree @ Vijayashree Srinidhi in favour of Mr. K. N. Ranganath stands cancelled/ revoked with immediate effect. Henceforth, Mr. K. N. Ranganath has no authority to deal with Plot No. 300, Century Eden, Doddaballapur.
Place: Bangalore
Date:24/5/2026

**AFFIDAVIT**

Bengaluru South District, Kanakapura Taluk, Kanakapura Town, J.C. Extention, Puttadas Road, Ward No.: 17, I, **Mrs. Nagaratna**, aged about 50 years, wife of **Mr. K. T. Ramu**, residing at this address, do hereby certify that Aadhaar No.: **(6759 7961 2913)**
I am a permanent resident of the above address and was previously registered in the same Kanakapura Sub-Registration Office, 1st Book Document No.: **KNK-10390)2007-08**, CD No.: **KNKD78 dated: 21-09-2007**, at the same Bangalore South District, Kanakapura Taluk, Kanakapura Town, J.C. Extension, Puttadas Road, Resident **Sri Ramakrishna** S/o Dasappa has registered a clean purchase deed in my name, **Nagaratna.** This letter is dated: 1**5-05-2026,** while Traveling in the KSRTC bus from Bangalore to Kanakapura, I have lost the registered purchase deed. In this regard, the authorities concerned have asked me for a certificate regarding the loss of the registered purchase deed, hence this certificate. I hereby certify that it is a true fact that I lost the registered purchase deed while traveling in the KSRTC bus from Bangalore to Kanakapura on **15-05-2026**, and I hereby certify that it is a true fact that I have lost the registered purchase deed. The above is true and correct. I hereby certify and sign that legal action may be taken if found to be false.

# PV SINDHU PRAISES ESHA SINGH AFTER GOLD

## PV SINDHU LAUDED ESHA SINGH FOLLOWING HER RECORD-BREAKING GOLD MEDAL PERFORMANCE AT THE ISSF WORLD CUP

**NEW DELHI**

Indian badminton star PV Sindhu has showered praise on young pistol shooter Esha Singh after the latter produced a remarkable performance to win gold and set a world record at the ISSF World Cup in Munich.

Esha, one of India's most promising shooting talents, delivered a dominant display in the women's 25m pistol event at the second ISSF World Cup Rifle/Pistol leg of the year. The 21-year-old secured the gold medal with a world record score of 43, which also stands as a junior world record. Her achievement came at the historic Olympic Shooting Range in Munich, one of the most prestigious venues in international shooting.

Reacting to the achievement, Sindhu praised Esha's temperament and ability to perform under pressure. In a post on social media platform X, the two-time Olympic medallist described the shooter as a calm and composed athlete who consistently rises to the occasion when it matters most.

"I have known of Esha and heard wonderful things about her for many years now. She trains in Hyderabad and has been supported by organisations that have played a significant role in nurturing sporting talent. I have always heard the same thing about her—calm, quiet, doesn't say much, but an absolute killer when it matters," Sindhu wrote.

The badminton star further congratulated Esha on her historic feat, saying that it was incredible to see her break a world record and claim gold on the international stage. Sindhu added that the future holds immense possibilities for the young shooter and encouraged her to continue reaching greater heights.

Esha's gold-medal-winning performance was marked by exceptional consistency and precision. In the final, she delivered perfect scores in five of the ten series of five shots, demonstrating complete control throughout the contest. Her dominance was reflected in the final standings, where she finished five shots ahead of Germany's Doreen Vennekamp, a former world champion competing in front of a home crowd.

Former Indian cricket opener Shikhar Dhawan also congratulated Esha on her achievement. In a message shared on social media, Dhawan described her success as another example of a young Indian athlete making a mark on the global stage. He said her world-record performance highlighted the bright future of Indian shooting.

Esha's triumph adds to an already impressive career that includes participation in the Olympics, multiple medals at world championships and success at the Asian Games.

# Govt Support Boosts Pranati Nayak's Major Preparations

**NEW DELHI**

Indian gymnast Pranati Nayak is receiving extensive support from the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, the Sports Authority of India (SAI) and the Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS) as she intensifies preparations for the 2026 Commonwealth Games and Asian Games.

The sustained assistance includes international exposure opportunities, foreign training programmes, national coaching camps and personalized support designed to help the country's leading gymnasts perform at the highest level. The support forms part of the government's broader strategy to strengthen India's gymnastics programme ahead of key international competitions.

A participant at the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games, Pranati Nayak is currently attending the Senior and Junior Women's Artistic Gymnastics National Coaching Camp at the High Performance Centre in Bhubaneswar. The camp, running from May 22 to June 20, is aimed at preparing Indian gymnasts for the 13th Senior Asian Championships scheduled to be held in Zunyi, China, from June 25 to 28, 2026.

Pranati has been selected as a member of the Indian senior women's artistic gymnastics team for the continental event. According to the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, the coaching camp has been approved with a budget of Rs 23.52 lakh and includes 21 participants comprising senior and junior gymnasts, coaches and support staff.

**Extensive government assistance is helping gymnast Pranati Nayak prepare for major international competitions ahead**

The government has also approved financial assistance worth Rs 36.59 lakh for the participation of the Indian Senior and Junior Women's Artistic Gymnastics contingent at the Asian Championships. The delegation consists of 17 members, including athletes, coaches and support personnel.

In addition to team-based support, Pranati has benefited from personalized assistance under the Target Olympic Podium Scheme. A financial grant of Rs 5.89 lakh was sanctioned for her participation in the FIG Artistic Gymnastics World Challenge Cup held in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, from May 19 to 25, 2026. The support covered Pranati, her coach Ashok Kumar Mishra and physiotherapist Dr. Sweta Attili.

The investment proved fruitful as Pranati returned with a silver medal from the prestigious international competition, adding another achievement to her growing list of accomplishments.

In a separate initiative aimed at enhancing India's long-term gymnastics prospects, TOPS approved Rs 75.65 lakh for an international training camp in the United Kingdom between November and December 2025. The programme also included participation in two international competitions conducted in February and April 2026. Although Pranati was part of the 16-member contingent selected for the programme, she was unable to participate due to injury.

Earlier this year, SAI had also organised a senior national coaching camp in Bhubaneswar from February 11 to March 15 as part of India's preparations for the Commonwealth Games and Asian Games.

## Powerlifting champion Mahant Gaurav Sharma distributes air coolers on birthday

**NEW DELHI**

Demonstrating that true champions make an impact both inside and outside the sporting arena, world champion powerlifter Mahant Gaurav Sharma celebrated his birthday by distributing air coolers to underprivileged families amid the scorching summer heat in the national capital.

The social welfare initiative was organised in Chandni Chowk and witnessed enthusiastic participation from local residents and devotees. With Delhi experiencing an intense heatwave, Mahant Gaurav Sharma personally handed over air coolers to several needy families, helping them find relief from the soaring temperatures.

The beneficiaries expressed gratitude and praised the athlete's thoughtful gesture, calling it a meaningful act of service during a challenging season.

*The Supreme Court permitted Vinesh Phogat to participate in Asian Games selection trials*

# Supreme Court Allows Vinesh Phogat To Join Trials

**NEW DELHI**

The Supreme Court on Friday allowed wrestler Vinesh Phogat to participate in the Asian Games 2026 selection trials while agreeing to examine a petition filed by the Wrestling Federation of India challenging the relief granted to her by the Delhi High Court.

A bench comprising Justices PS Narasimha and Alok Aradhe issued a notice on the Special Leave Petition filed by the Wrestling Federation of India and permitted Phogat to compete in the selection trials scheduled for May 30 and 31.

The apex court directed that Phogat be allowed to take part in the trials and clarified that the larger legal and procedural issues raised by the Wrestling Federation of India would be examined at a later stage. As a result, the interim relief granted by the Delhi High Court will continue to remain in force for the time being.

During the hearing, the bench expressed concern regarding matters related to Phogat's anti-doping obligations. The court specifically referred to issues surrounding her failure to provide authorities with information regarding her whereabouts during the relevant period, an important requirement under anti-doping regulations.

The judges observed that compliance with anti-doping protocols is a critical responsibility for every athlete. These obligations include timely participation in testing procedures and maintaining accurate whereabouts information to facilitate out-of-competition testing. The court indicated that these concerns would be considered while examining the broader issues involved in the case.

The Supreme Court also raised questions about certain observations made by the Delhi High Court while granting interim relief to the wrestler. In particular, the apex court noted its reservations regarding the High Court's prima facie observation that the Wrestling Federation of India's eligibility framework appeared to be exclusionary in nature.

Questioning the basis for such findings at the interim stage, the bench observed that the federation's selection policy had been formulated in February 2026 and was intended to apply uniformly to all athletes competing for selection. The judges suggested that such conclusions may require a more detailed examination before being recorded.

Despite these observations, the Supreme Court chose not to interfere with the immediate relief granted to Phogat. By allowing her participation in the trials, the court ensured that the three-time Olympian would not lose an opportunity to compete for a place in India's squad for the 2026 Asian Games while the legal proceedings continue.

# Carlsen Defeats Gukesh in Thrilling Norway Chess Clash

**OSLO**

Round Four of the prestigious Norway Chess tournament delivered another captivating day of elite-level competition in Oslo, highlighted by a much-anticipated showdown between World No. 1 Magnus Carlsen and reigning World Champion Gukesh Dommaraju. Playing with the black pieces, Carlsen produced a clinical display to defeat Gukesh in a complex and strategically demanding encounter. The game remained evenly balanced through much of the opening and early middlegame, with neither player gaining a significant edge. However, Carlsen gradually increased the pressure and capitalized on small inaccuracies from the young Indian grandmaster.

As the contest entered a critical phase, Gukesh found himself under mounting pressure and short of time on the clock. Carlsen expertly converted his positional advantage into a winning endgame, securing an important classical victory. The result significantly boosts the Norwegian star's position in the tournament standings after a relatively slow start to his campaign on home soil.

The other two classical games in the open section ended in draws following closely contested battles. Wesley So and Alireza Firouzja played a strategic encounter in which neither player managed to create decisive winning chances. The game proceeded to an Armageddon playoff, where So emerged victorious to claim the additional points.

Meanwhile, Vincent Keymer and R Praggnanandhaa fought a balanced contest featuring opportunities for both players. After the classical game ended in a draw, Praggnanandhaa prevailed in the Armageddon playoff to secure valuable extra points.

Despite losing in Armageddon, Firouzja continues to hold the lead in the overall standings after four rounds. Carlsen's victory over Gukesh has nevertheless strengthened his challenge and moved him closer to the top contenders.

The women's section of the tournament also witnessed a series of tightly fought encounters, with all three classical games ending in draws before being decided in Armageddon.

Koneru Humpy and Zhu Jiner shared the points in classical play after a tense struggle. Zhu later won the Armageddon game to collect the bonus points. World champion Ju Wenjun held off persistent pressure from Bibisara Assaubayeva to secure a draw in their classical encounter. Assaubayeva subsequently triumphed in Armageddon to earn additional points and maintain her impressive form.

In the final women's game, Divya Deshmukh enjoyed promising positions against Anna Muzychuk for much of the middlegame. However, Muzychuk defended resiliently to force a draw before winning the Armageddon playoff.

# Captain Ketan's hat-trick leads India men to dominating 13-0 win over Kazakhstan

**KAKAMIGAHARA**

Captain Ketan Kushwaha scored a hat-trick as the Indian men's hockey team opened its campaign at the U-18 Asia Cup 2026 with a dominant 13-0 victory over Kazakhstan in Pool A here on Friday.

Ketan led from the front with three goals, while Prahalad Rajbhar, Ashish Tani Purti, Ansh Bahutra and Shahrukh Ali registered a brace each.

India controlled proceedings from the outset and were rewarded for their persistence after Kazakhstan weathered the early pressure. Shahrukh Ali (12') broke the deadlock with a thunderous strike from inside the circle before Prahalad Rajbhar (14') doubled the advantage just two minutes later, giving India a firm grip on the contest by the end of the first quarter.

Goals continued to flow in the second quarter. Captain Kushwaha (18') was well placed to finish from close range after India won possession high up the pitch, while Gazee Khan (20') added a fourth shortly after to extend the lead.

India showed no signs of easing off before the break. Shahrukh (29') completed his brace with a clinical finish, and Purti (30') converted a penalty corner a minute later, as India surged to a commanding 6-0 lead at half-time.

The third quarter proved to be the most productive, with four of India's five goals coming through penalty corners. Bahutra (31', 44') converted twice while Purti also went on to complete a brace.

In the final minute of the quarter, Kushwaha scored twice in quick succession, including a penalty corner, to complete his hat-trick. India finished the third quarter with an 11-0 lead.

The men in blue kept the pressure on in the final quarter to round off a resounding victory. Akash Deep (47') tapped the ball into an open goal to put his name on the scoresheet before Rajbhar scored his second goal of the day in the 51st minute.

India will next face hosts Japan on May 31 as they look to continue their winning start to the tournament.

# Chinnappa among four Indians in the top 10 at IGPL Morocco Rising Stars

**EL JADIDA**

May 29 (SocialNews.XYZ) Trishul Chinnappa staged a great recovery on his second nine with five birdies in the last six holes to move into the top 10 in the first round of the USD 160,000 IGPL Morocco Rising Stars.

He was Tied-eighth with three other Indians, Sudhir Sharma, Raghav Chugh and Syed Saqib Ahmed. They were three shots behind the leader Hoho Yue of Hong Kong, who shot 6-under 66.

Like Chinnappa, Saqib also had a fine second nine with three birdies, while Sharma, who started the round in the very last group of the day, had an eagle on his first nine. Chugh, who teed off in the second group in the morning, had five birdies against two bogeys.

The four Indians, all prominent players on the IGPL Tour, are still searching for their maiden success on the IGPL and the ADT Tours.

Giving Chugh, Sharma, Saqib and Chinnappa company at Tied-8th were five others, including former Indian Open champion Siddikur Rehman of Bangladesh, Henry Chung of the US, Xu Andi of China and the Thai duo of Nopparat Panichpohol and Thanapol Charoensuk. They shot 69 each.

Chinnappa after a patchy start with three bogeys against two birdies on the front nine. An early bogey on the tenth saw him fall to two-over. Then he flourished as he birdied five times in last six holes. It included four in a row from the 13th. He putted very well, needing just 25 for his entire round.

Chinnappa said, "I played in the afternoon. It was a good start. I made a birdie on the third hole of the day.

## QUICK READ

### IMF concerned over Pakistan military economic control report

**LAHORE**

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) is reportedly concerned over the increasing role of Pakistan's military in controlling key economic decision-making structures, according to an article published by Pressenza International Press Agency. The report highlights an ongoing power struggle during Pakistan's negotiations for new bailout packages with the IMF. It states that state-owned enterprises, energy facilities, mines, ports and banks are becoming arenas of competing governance models. One approach is driven by the military, focusing on speed and rapid investment agreements, while the IMF emphasizes institutional discipline, transparency and accountability. The analysis by Dimitra Staiku describes this tension as a silent but significant factor influencing economic reforms and financial negotiations in Pakistan.

### Middle East war hits Global Air travel demand: IATA

**NEW DELHI**

Global air passenger demand declined by 3.4 per cent year-on-year in April 2026, largely due to the ongoing war in the Middle East, according to data released by the International Air Transport Association (IATA) on Friday. The report said total demand, measured in revenue passenger kilometers (RPK), fell by 3.4 per cent compared to April 2025, while global airline capacity, measured in available seat kilometers (ASK), dropped by 2.9 per cent. The overall load factor stood at 83.1 per cent, marking a decline of 0.4 percentage points from the previous year.

### Semiconductors crucial for India's future growth

**MUMBAI**

Stressing the strategic importance of semiconductor manufacturing and related technologies, Padma Shri awardee Prof. Juzer Vasi said on Friday that semiconductors play a critical role not only in chip production but also across consumer electronics, defence systems, space technology and several other sectors vital to India's growth and self-reliance. After being honoured with the Padma Shri in the field of Science and Engineering, Prof. Vasi said he was deeply honoured and surprised to receive the award. He noted that his work over the years has largely focused on semiconductors and solar energy, both of which he described as essential for India's long-term development.

# India Central Asia Uranium Ties Gain Momentum

India's expanding nuclear energy ambitions are strengthening long-term uranium cooperation with key Central Asian nations

**NEW DELHI**

India's rapidly growing civilian nuclear energy programme is creating new opportunities for deeper strategic cooperation with Central Asian countries, particularly Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, according to an analysis published by Geopolitical Monitor. The report highlights that long-term uranium supply agreements are evolving beyond conventional trade arrangements and are becoming an important pillar of broader geopolitical and economic engagement between India and the region.

A major milestone in this cooperation was reached in 2026 when Kazakhstan's national uranium company Kazatomprom and India's Department of Atomic Energy signed a uranium supply contract valued at more than $4 billion. The agreement is being viewed as a significant step in transforming bilateral energy relations into a long-term strategic partnership.

Analysts believe the deal reflects India's determination to diversify its nuclear fuel sources while strengthening ties with resource-rich countries across Eurasia.

India has set ambitious targets for expanding its civilian nuclear power capacity. The country aims to achieve 100 gigawatts of civilian nuclear capacity by 2047, with an interim objective of reaching 22,480 megawatts by 2031-32. The government is also placing strong emphasis on the development of small modular reactors, which are expected to play a key role in future energy generation. To support these goals, the 2025-26 budget allocated more than $2 billion for nuclear development initiatives, while a dedicated Nuclear Energy Mission with funding of Rs 200 billion seeks to establish at least five domestically designed small modular reactors by 2033.

Kazakhstan is emerging as a particularly valuable partner for India's nuclear ambitions. The Central Asian nation possesses around 14 percent of the world's uranium reserves and remains the largest uranium producer globally. In 2025, Kazakhstan produced approximately 25,800 tonnes of uranium, including 13,500 tonnes attributed to Kazatomprom. This accounted for nearly one-fifth of global primary uranium output, underlining the country's critical role in international nuclear fuel markets.

The report notes that uranium cooperation between India and Kazakhstan already rests on a strong institutional foundation. Kazakhstan has long been one of India's major uranium suppliers alongside Canada. However, the latest agreement elevates the relationship from regular commercial transactions to a more comprehensive strategic connection.

For New Delhi, securing reliable uranium supplies from Kazakhstan strengthens energy security and reduces dependence on a limited number of suppliers as nuclear power generation expands. For Kazakhstan, the growing Indian market offers greater economic opportunities and strategic flexibility amid strong Chinese involvement in Central Asia's extraction, logistics and raw material sectors.

# Toyota launches electric urban cruiser Ebella at Rs 23.6 lakh

**Toyota unveiled the all-electric Urban Cruiser Ebella, featuring advanced technology, safety systems and premium comfort.**

**BENGALURU**

Toyota Kirloskar Motor has announced the price of its all-electric SUV, the Toyota Urban Cruiser Ebella E3 variant, at Rs. 23.60 lakh (ex-showroom). The launch supports Toyota's multi-pathway strategy aimed at promoting sustainable and carbon-neutral mobility solutions.

The new electric SUV combines bold styling, spacious interiors, modern technology and smooth performance, backed by Toyota's long experience in electrified vehicles worldwide. The E3 variant comes with a 61 kWh battery pack, producing 128 kW power and 189 Nm torque.

The Urban Cruiser Ebella features Toyota's "Urban Tech" design language with a strong SUV look, aerodynamic body, signature hammerhead front design, LED lighting, dual-tone exterior options and 18-inch alloy wheels. Inside, the SUV offers a premium cabin with dual-tone interiors, ventilated front seats, ambient lighting with 12 colour options, panoramic roof, sliding and reclining rear seats, and a JBL sound system for enhanced comfort. On the technology front, the vehicle includes a 10.25-inch digital instrument cluster and a 10.1-inch multimedia touchscreen with wireless Apple CarPlay and Android Auto connectivity.

For safety, the SUV is equipped with Level 2 ADAS, seven airbags, a high-tensile body structure and a 360-degree camera system. Toyota is also offering an 8-year battery warranty, assured buyback plans, Battery-as-a-Service options and special finance schemes.

The EV supports both AC and DC fast charging and will be available in five monotone and four dual-tone colour choices.

## MSME global integration needs multi pronged strategy

**NEW DELHI**

There is a need for a multi-pronged approach to bridge the technology divide through greater digital inclusion, stronger innovation capabilities, and improved technology readiness of MSMEs to support their integration into regional and global value chains, an official statement said on Friday.

This was conveyed at the second 'SME Working Group Meeting' by the Ministry of MSME under the 'BRICS Partnership on the New Industrial Revolution (PartNIR)' here.

The meeting saw active participation from BRICS Member Countries and provided a platform for sharing experiences and best practices, while underscoring the role of MSMEs in economic growth, employment generation, innovation, and inclusive development.

Discussions highlighted the need for a multi-pronged approach to bridge the technology divide through greater digital inclusion, stronger innovation capabilities, and improved technology readiness of MSMEs to support their integration into regional and global value chains, according to the statement.

The meet also reiterated the importance of deeper collaboration among BRICS economies in technology access, innovation ecosystems, and skills development for MSMEs.

## Assam reports strong growth and fiscal stability

**GUWAHATI**

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma highlighted the state's improving economic performance and sound fiscal management, stating that Assam is steadily advancing towards the goal of becoming a Viksit Assam through sustained growth, responsible governance and prudent financial planning.

Sharing key economic indicators, the Chief Minister said Assam has successfully maintained a revenue surplus for five consecutive years, from 2020 to 2025. The achievement, he noted, reflects the state's strengthening fiscal position and its commitment to disciplined public finance management. A revenue surplus occurs when government income exceeds expenditure, allowing greater flexibility in funding development initiatives while maintaining financial stability.

According to figures released by the state government, Assam's contribution to the national Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has also registered a significant increase over the past five years. The state's share in the national GDP rose from 1.71 per cent in 2020-21 to 1.95 per cent in 2024-25, indicating steady economic expansion and growing participation in the country's overall economic output. Describing these developments as important milestones, Chief Minister Sarma said the state government's emphasis on infrastructure development, investment promotion, fiscal discipline and welfare-oriented governance has helped create a stronger economic foundation. He stated that these efforts are contributing to sustained growth while ensuring responsible management of public resources.

A Viksit Assam rests on the foundations of fiscal prudence and sustained economic expansion, the Chief Minister said in a statement shared through social media. He added that maintaining a revenue surplus for five straight years demonstrates the government's ability to balance development spending with financial responsibility.

## PM Surya Ghar scheme achieves major solar milestone

**NEW DELHI**

India has crossed a historic milestone by connecting 40 lakh homes to rooftop solar under the 'PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana', Union Petroleum and Gas Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said on Friday.

Under the guidance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, this initiative is not only freeing the country's common citizens from electricity bills and making them 'Atmanirbhar' but also saving the environment. Puri posted on X. India becomes superpower of solar power A major achievement in the direction of clean energy, said the minister. Echoing similar sentiments, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said that your own roof is becoming a home of energy, Family is becoming empowered and life is becoming self-reliant. Under the PM Surya Ghar scheme, more than 40 lakh families have already connected with solar energy, Goyal posted on X. Under the leadership of PM Modi, this new India is not only saving electricity, but also scripting a new revolution of change in the energy sector, he noted.

Under the scheme, funds amounting to Rs 14,585.29 crore have been utilised in FY26 (till March 5), against Rs 7,822.92 crore in FY25.

Launched in 2024, the PM Muft Bijli Yojana is a demand-driven scheme wherein all residential consumers in the country having grid connected electricity connection of the local discom can avail the benefits of the scheme, for the installation of Rooftop Solar systems, by applying on the National Portal of the scheme.

## Tesla introduces Model Y Premium Rear-Wheel Drive

**NEW DELHI**

Tesla on Friday announced the launch of the Model Y Premium Rear-Wheel Drive in India, expanding its electric vehicle portfolio in the country with a new premium variant of the segment. The new model has a starting price of Rs 50.89 lakh, and deliveries will commence in India from July 2026, according to the company.

The newly launched variant introduces a range of hardware and design upgrades aimed at improving performance, comfort and interior experience.

It boasts an all-black interior, a larger 16-inch first-row touchscreen with improved responsiveness and an optional Zen Grey interior theme.

The model offers up to 2,138 litres of storage capacity and can accommodate up to five passengers with power-folding seats for additional cargo space, said Tesla.

## ICRA report shows dip in domestic air travel demand

**NEW DELHI**

Domestic air passenger traffic in India fell 2 per cent year-on-year (YoY) in April 2026 to 140.8 lakh passengers, amid geopolitical disruptions, a report said on Friday.

The domestic air traffic stood at 143.1 lakh passengers in the same month last year, according to ICRA's latest monthly report on the aviation sector.

On a sequential basis, traffic was also lower by 2 per cent from 143.7 lakh passengers recorded in March 2026, the report said.

The report noted that airlines' capacity deployment in April 2026 was 0.6 per cent lower than the year-ago period and 1.4 per cent lower compared to March 2026.

For the full financial year 2025-26, domestic air passenger traffic stood at 1,677.4 lakh passengers, registering a modest year-on-year growth of 1.4 per cent, in line with ICRA's estimate of 0-3 per cent growth.

International air passenger traffic for Indian carriers grew 3.9 per cent to 350 lakh passengers during FY2026, lower than the agency's earlier estimate of 7-9 per cent growth.

ICRA said it had revised its outlook on the Indian aviation industry to Negative from Stable in March 2026 due to the expected weakening in profitability caused by higher aviation turbine fuel (ATF) prices, depreciation of the rupee against the US dollar and disruption in international airspace availability following the escalation of geopolitical conflict in West Asia.

The agency warned that flight cancellations, airspace closures and rising airfares due to fuel surcharges are likely to weigh on passenger traffic growth in the coming months.

It also noted that although the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has removed airfare caps introduced in December 2025, demand could soften if ticket prices rise sharply.

According to the report, some airlines have already announced curtailment of international flights because of demand disruptions and escalating costs linked to the West Asian conflict.

ICRA said this could reverse the increase in international seat capacity share witnessed during FY2026.

INDIA US TRADE

# *US DELEGATION TO VISIT INDIA FOR TRADE NEGOTIATIONS*

**NEW DELHI**

India and the United States are set to continue their ongoing trade negotiations as a US trade delegation is expected to visit India next week, according to the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA). The visit is aimed at advancing discussions on key trade and economic issues while reinforcing the growing partnership between the two countries.

Speaking during a media briefing on Friday, MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said that engagement between India and the United States on trade matters has remained positive and constructive. He noted that both sides have been actively working to deepen economic cooperation through regular consultations and negotiations.

Jaiswal recalled that an Indian trade delegation had visited the United States in April for discussions with American counterparts. The upcoming visit by the US team will build upon those talks and provide an opportunity for both countries to continue exploring areas of mutual interest and cooperation.

The engagement between India and the United States on trade issues remains positive and constructive, the MEA spokesperson said, adding that the next round of discussions is scheduled to take place during the American delegation's visit to India.

Trade relations between India and the United States have expanded significantly over the years, making the US one of India's most important economic partners. The two countries have been working to enhance market access, strengthen supply chains, promote investment flows and address trade-related concerns through dialogue and negotiation.

Officials from both sides are expected to discuss a range of issues aimed at further improving bilateral trade and economic cooperation. The talks are likely to focus on measures that can facilitate business, encourage investment and support long-term growth in commercial relations between the two nations.

The visit comes at a time when India and the United States are seeking to deepen strategic and economic ties across multiple sectors, including technology, manufacturing, energy and digital trade. Strong economic engagement has become a central pillar of the broader partnership between the two democracies.

Observers believe that continued dialogue and regular exchanges between trade officials will help both countries address challenges, identify new opportunities and strengthen their economic relationship. The upcoming negotiations are expected to contribute to ongoing efforts aimed at expanding bilateral trade and creating a more predictable and mutually beneficial framework for future cooperation.

With both governments expressing commitment to constructive engagement, the next round of talks is being viewed as another important step towards enhancing economic collaboration and reinforcing the growing partnership between India and the United States.

# RISHABH PANT Steps Down as Lucknow Captain

Lucknow Super Giants accepted Rishabh Pant's request to relinquish captaincy after a disappointing season

**LUCKNOW**

Lucknow Super Giants have confirmed that Rishabh Pant has stepped down as captain of the franchise, bringing an end to a leadership tenure that lasted two Indian Premier League seasons. The announcement was made through the franchise's official social media channels following a disappointing 2026 campaign in which the team finished at the bottom of the points table.

According to the franchise, Pant personally approached the management with a request to relinquish his leadership responsibilities, and the request was accepted after discussions with team officials. Lucknow Super Giants Director of Cricket Tom Moody acknowledged Pant's contribution to the team and expressed gratitude for his efforts as captain.

Rishabh approached the franchise with this request and we have respectfully accepted it, Moody said. He added that leadership transitions are never easy but emphasized that the franchise's priority now is to focus on rebuilding and restructuring the squad to achieve higher standards in the coming seasons.

Pant joined Lucknow Super Giants ahead of the 2025 season in one of the most talked-about moves in IPL history. After spending eight seasons with Delhi Capitals, the wicketkeeper-batter was acquired by Lucknow for a record-breaking Rs 27 crore at the player auction. Following the high-profile signing, he was immediately entrusted with the captaincy as the franchise looked to begin a new chapter.

However, results on the field failed to meet expectations. During the 2025 season, Pant struggled for consistency with the bat despite producing an unbeaten century. He ended the campaign with 269 runs as Lucknow finished seventh in the standings. The following season brought only marginal improvement in his batting returns, with 312 runs from 13 innings. Team performances also declined significantly, with Lucknow managing just four victories while suffering ten defeats to finish tenth and last in the league table.

The franchise had previously been led by KL Rahul from its inaugural season in 2022. Under Rahul's leadership, Lucknow qualified for the playoffs twice and finished seventh once. After parting ways with Rahul, the team sought a fresh start under Pant's captaincy, hoping to build a new competitive identity.v

## Harmanpreet reveals coach Muzumdar's blunt message

**NEW DELHI**

Indian captain Harmanpreet Kaur has revealed the blunt dressing-room message from head coach Amol Muzumdar after the team's third consecutive defeat at the Women's World Cup 2025, admitting that the reality check played a key role in India's remarkable turnaround en route to lifting the title. Harmanpreet recalled how the atmosphere in the dressing room changed following India's defeat to England, which came after successive losses and left the team staring at an early exit from the tournament. After the England match, I think Amol sir was the only one who spoke, and he was very straightforward. Everybody took it in the right spirit because we all knew there was nothing wrong in what he was saying. That was the first time I saw his volume go a little high because he is usually a very soft-spoken person. I remember him saying, 'Go and buy a mirror and see what you're doing and what you need to do at that stage' Harmanpreet said on JioStar.

# South Africa Women To Tour Zimbabwe For First Time

**CAPE TOWN**

Zimbabwe Cricket has announced that South Africa Women will undertake a historic tour of Zimbabwe later this year, marking the first-ever bilateral series between the two sides on Zimbabwean soil. The tour is scheduled to take place in September 2026 and will feature five Twenty20 Internationals at the Queens Sports Club in Bulawayo.

The series represents a significant milestone for women's cricket in Zimbabwe, providing the national team with an opportunity to compete against one of the strongest sides in the international game. It will also be the first senior-level meeting between the two teams in nearly a decade. Their previous encounters came during a quadrangular tournament held in South Africa in May 2017, where the sides faced each other twice.

Zimbabwe Women will enter the series looking to gain valuable experience and improve their performances against top-ranked opposition. The team last hosted an international series at home during September and October 2025, when they welcomed the United Arab Emirates Women's team. Since then, Zimbabwe have undertaken overseas tours to New Zealand and Pakistan as part of their efforts to gain greater international exposure.

Zimbabwe will host South Africa Women in a historic five-match T20 International series in September

Despite those opportunities, Zimbabwe experienced a difficult campaign in the Women's Twenty20 World Cup Qualifier held in Nepal earlier this year. The team was unable to secure qualification for the global tournament, which is scheduled to begin in England next month. The upcoming series against South Africa is therefore expected to play an important role in the team's preparations and long-term development.

Zimbabwe Cricket Managing Director Givemore Makoni welcomed the announcement, describing the tour as a landmark occasion for women's cricket in the country. He said hosting a world-class side such as South Africa would provide Zimbabwean players with a valuable opportunity to test their skills against elite competition while playing in familiar home conditions.

Makoni also emphasized that the series reflects Zimbabwe Cricket's ongoing commitment to strengthening the women's game and creating more opportunities for female cricketers to compete at the highest level. He noted that regular exposure to strong international teams is essential for player development and the growth of the sport within the country.

The five-match series is expected to attract considerable interest from cricket fans and provide an important platform for both teams ahead of future international assignments. For South Africa Women, the tour offers another opportunity to build momentum and fine-tune their squad, while for Zimbabwe Women it represents a chance to gain experience, confidence and valuable competitive exposure against one of the leading teams in world cricket.

## An 80 in a winning cause means more than a hundred: Vaibhav Sooryavanshi

**NEW DELHI**

Rajasthan Royals (RR) and India's young batting sensation Vaibhav Sooryavanshi credited his father for shaping his team-first mentality, saying personal milestones hold little value if they do not contribute to victories for the side. Speaking about prioritizing team success over individual achievements, Vaibhav said he values impactful contributions in winning causes more than personal records. Since childhood, my father has always told me that if you score a hundred, a double hundred, or even a triple hundred, but the team does not win because of it, then those runs hold no value. They may only be for your personal record, but they do not benefit the team, he told Jio Hotstar. The 15-year-old, who missed his well-deserved hundred by just three runs against Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) in the eliminator, added that an 80-run innings in a winning cause is much bigger than a century.

## Jemimah and Yastika's partnership made the difference,' says Dean after ENG loss

**CHELMSFORD**

England stand-in captain Charlotte Dean admitted the huge partnership between Jemimah Rodrigues and Yastika Bhatia proved decisive as England suffered a 38-run defeat to India in the opening match of the three-game Women's T20I series at the County Ground.

England made the perfect start after Lauren Bell struck twice in the opening over to dismiss Smriti Mandhana and Shafali Verma, reducing India to 7/2.

However, Yastika and Rodrigues counterattacked brilliantly with a 126-run stand for the third wicket, helping India recover strongly and post 188/7 in 19.5 overs.

Reflecting on the game, Dean said England started well but failed to stop India's momentum through the middle overs.

Two early wickets. But they kept scoring runs despite those early wickets. They had wickets in hand. Played really well, Dean said after the match.

Dean praised her side's effort in challenging weather conditions and credited Bell for her performance with the ball. Bell finished with figures of 3/34 and bowled effectively both with the new ball and at the death.

Proud of the effort in hot conditions. Bell bowled well at the start and the death, she said.

Chasing 189, England were kept in the contest by Amy Jones, who played a fighting knock of 67. Heather Knight also contributed 21 during a 64-run stand for the third wicket, but England eventually finished on 150/8.

## BCCI Bans Smart Goggles During IPL Matches

**NEW DELHI**

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has issued a strict directive prohibiting the possession and use of smart goggles and smart sunglasses by players and support staff participating in the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026. The instruction was communicated through the BCCI's Anti Corruption and Security Unit (ACSU) as part of enhanced measures aimed at protecting the integrity and security of the tournament.

According to protocols circulated to IPL franchises on May 18, certain smart eyewear devices currently available in the market are equipped with advanced communication and recording capabilities. These features include live streaming, audio and video recording, text messaging, as well as voice and video calling through mobile data or Wi-Fi connectivity.

The ACSU has expressed concerns that such technology could potentially compromise the strict security framework maintained within controlled tournament environments. As a result, these devices have been classified under the Players and Match Officials Area (PMOA) regulations as both communication devices and audio-video recording equipment.

Under existing PMOA guidelines, players, team officials and support staff are not permitted to carry communication or recording devices within designated restricted areas on match days. The BCCI has therefore made it clear that smart goggles and similar wearable technology fall within the category of prohibited items.

To ensure compliance, all players and support personnel have been instructed to deposit any such devices with the designated Security Liaison Officer before entering the Players and Match Officials Area.

# Australia Backs Sutherland for Key Finishing Role

**SYDNEY**

Australia head coach Shelley Nitschke has expressed confidence in Annabel Sutherland taking on an important finishing role at the 2026 Women's T20 World Cup, highlighting the all-rounder's versatility as a major asset for the team ahead of the global tournament.

Australia will enter this year's competition with a different challenge compared to recent editions. For the first time since 2018, the team will not be defending the World Cup title, creating a fresh dynamic as they aim to reclaim the championship. Preparations are already underway, with Australia scheduled to play three practice matches against South Africa Women's Cricket Team in Arundel beginning on Sunday. Additional warm-up fixtures against England Women's Cricket Team and West Indies Women's Cricket Team will follow before their tournament opener against South Africa on June 13.

Speaking ahead of the event, Nitschke indicated that Australia is close to finalising its preferred playing eleven. However, she acknowledged that varying conditions during the tournament may require flexibility in team selection and player roles.

While Sutherland's place in the side appears secure due to her effectiveness with the ball, discussions have continued regarding her batting position and responsibilities. The 24-year-old has established herself as a valuable contributor in Australia's T20 setup, particularly through her pace bowling and ability to influence matches in multiple ways.

Sutherland's batting role has evolved throughout her international career. In 48 T20 International appearances, she has batted only 23 times, with most of those innings coming in the lower middle order at numbers seven and eight. Despite limited opportunities, she has produced several impactful performances, including a memorable debut against England in 2020 when a rapid 22 runs from just 11 deliveries helped force a Super Over.

During Australia's most recent T20 International series against India in February, Sutherland batted below the returning Nicola Carey in one match. Team management explained that decision as a tactical move based on matchups, particularly because Carey is a left-handed batter.

# 'I was broken inside': Jemimah reveals mental battle behind India's World Cup triumph

**NEW DELHI**

India batter Jemimah Rodrigues has revealed the emotional turmoil she went through during the ICC Women's World Cup 2025, admitting that the pressure of performing at a home tournament and being dropped from the playing XI for a crucial match left her broken inside.

Speaking on JioStar's 'Unstoppable' ahead of the ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2026, Jemimah reflected on the difficult phase she endured even before the tournament began, as expectations and pressure started taking a toll on her mentally.

For some reason, even before the World Cup started, I was not doing well mentally. Maybe it was because it was a home World Cup, and with the expectations that come with it. And it being a World Cup, the pressure doubles, Jemimah said.

In the very first match, I got out for a duck off the first ball itself. That really broke me; it crushed me. The worst part was that it started affecting my fielding as well. I am someone who enjoys fielding, but I was putting so much pressure on myself that I wasn't able to move the way I normally do. I made a few misfields, which I usually wouldn't, she added.

India's World Cup campaign had reached a critical stage after consecutive defeats left their semi-final hopes hanging by a thread. Jemimah revealed that a quickfire knock against Australia in the league stage helped her regain some confidence before the all-important clash against England.

Then came the league game against Australia, where I scored an impactful 33-odd at a good strike rate. That gave me some confidence, and I told myself, 'Okay, fine. The England game is very important. Let's do whatever it takes to win against England,' she said.

I really wanted to do it for the team because the World Cup was at stake, and we had already lost two games in a row. That game was crucial, she added.

However, on the morning of the England match, Jemimah received news that left her devastated.

Amol sir messaged me saying, 'I need to talk to you.' Then, at the ground, I was told that I had been dropped from the team for that game. I was broken inside, she revealed.

City Hilights (English Daily) published by P. Sunil Kumar (Publisher) on behalf of Immaculate Broadcasting Consortium World News (P) Ltd., No. 18, JRV Court, Queens's Road, Bengaluru – 560001 and printed at Vihaan Media #85/J, Industrial suburb 2nd stage, Yeshwantpur Extension,Bangalore-560022, Printed at No-7/2 plot no.CA-3/1,28(p)&29(p) Kapanoor 2nd Stage Industrial Area Kapnoor Village Kalaburagi -585104. Printed at S. J. R. V. Printers, No. 208 Plot No. B-019 KSSIDC Industrial Area, Irfan Ahamed Khan Pathan, 4th Main Road Gamanagatti, Hubballi-Dharwad – 580025. and Elegant Offset Printers Pvt. Ltd. No. 5-61/1, Shed No. M-6, Yeyyadi Industrial Estate, Yeyyadi, Mangalore - 575 008. (RNI No: KARENG / 2015 / 63243), Regd. No. BGGPO-2581/2017-2019 Posted at Bengaluru PSO-560026 Email - cityhilights.news@gmail.com Phone: 080-41209042. Copyright. All rights reserved. Reproduction without permission is prohibited.